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A MODERN INSTANCE.

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A MODERN INSTANCE

A Novel

BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE LADY OF THE AROOSTOOK," "THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY," "A FOREGONE CONCLUSION," ETC.

142268

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH

DAVID DOUGLAS

1882

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A MODERN INSTANCE.

I.

THE village stood on a wide plain, and around it rose the mountains. They were green to their tops in summer, and in winter white through their serried pines and drifting mists, but at every season serious and beautiful, furrowed with hollow shadows, and taking the light on masses and stretches of iron-grey crag. The river swam through the plain in long curves, and slipped away at last through an unseen pass to the southward, tracing a score of miles in its course over a space that measured but three or four. The plain was very fertile, and its features, if few and of purely utilitarian beauty, had a rich luxuriance, and there was a tropical riot of vegetation when the sun of July beat on those northern fields. They waved with corn and oats to the feet of the mountains, and the potatoes covered a vast acreage with the lines of their intense, coarse green; the meadows were deep with English grass to the banks of the river, that, doubling and returning upon itself,

still marked its way with a dense fringe of alders and white birches.

But winter was full half the year. The snow began at Thanksgiving,[1] and fell snow upon snow till Fast Day,[2] thawing between the storms, and packing harder and harder against the break-up in the spring, when it covered the ground in solid levels three feet high, and lay heaped in drifts, that defied the sun far into May. When it did not snow the weather was keenly clear, and commonly very still. Then the landscape at noon had a stereoscopic glister under the high sun that burned in a heaven without a cloud, and at setting stained the sky and the white waste with freezing pink and violet. On such days the farmers and lumbermen came in to the village stores, and made a stiff and feeble stir about their doorways, and the school-children gave the street a little life and colour, as they went to and from the Academy in their red and blue woollens. Four times a day the mill, the shrill wheeze of whose saws had become part of the habitual silence, blew its whistle for the hands to begin and leave off work, in blasts that seemed to shatter themselves against the thin air. But otherwise an arctic quiet prevailed.

Behind the black boles of the elms that swept the vista of the street with the fine grey tracery

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[1] In November. [2] In April.

of their boughs, stood the houses, deep-sunken in the accumulating drifts, through which each householder kept a path cut from his doorway to the road, white and clean as if hewn out of marble. Some cross-streets straggled away east and west with the poorer dwellings; but this, that followed the northward and southward reach of the plain, was the main thoroughfare, and had its own impressiveness, with those square white houses which they build so large in northern New England. They were all kept in scrupulous repair, though here and there the frost and thaw of many winters had heaved a fence out of plumb, and threatened the poise of the monumental urns of painted pine on the gate-posts. They had dark-green blinds, of a colour harmonious with that of the funereal evergreens in their door-yards; and they themselves had taken the tone of the snowy landscape, as if by the operation of some such law as blanches the fur-bearing animals of the North. They seemed proper to its desolation, while some houses of more modern taste, painted to a warmer tone, looked, with their mansard-roofs and jig-sawed piazzas and balconies, intrusive and alien.

At one end of the street stood the Academy, with its classic façade and its belfry; midway was the hotel with the stores, the printing-office and the churches, and at the other extreme, one of

the square white mansions stood advanced from the rank of the rest, at the top of a deep-plunging valley, defining itself against the mountain beyond so sharply that it seemed as if cut out of its dark wooded side. It was from the gate before this house, distinct in the pink light which the sunset had left, that, on a Saturday evening in February, a cutter,[1] gay with red-lined robes, dashed away, and came musically clashing down the street under the naked elms. For the women who sat with their work at the windows on either side of the way hesitating whether to light their lamps, and drawing nearer and nearer to the deadline of the outer cold for the latest glimmer of the day, the passage of this ill-timed vehicle was a vexation little short of grievous. Every movement on the street was precious to them, and with all the keenness of their starved curiosity, these captives of the winter could not make out the people in the cutter. Afterward it was a mortification to them that they should not have thought at once of Bartley Hubbard and Marcia Gaylord. They had seen him go up toward Squire Gaylord's house half an hour before, and they now blamed themselves for not reflecting that of course he was going to take Marcia over to the church sociable

[1] A light one-horse sleigh.

at Lower Equity. Their identity being established, other little proofs of it reproached the inquirers; but these perturbed spirits were at peace, and the lamps were out in the houses (where the smell of rats in the wainscot and of potatoes in the cellar strengthened with the growing night) when Bartley and Marcia drove back through the moonlit silence to her father's door. Here, too, the windows were all dark, except for the light that sparely glimmered through the parlour blinds; and the young man slackened the pace of his horse, as if to still the bells, some distance away from the gate.

The girl took the hand he offered her when he dismounted at the gate, and as she jumped from the cutter,—"Won't you come in?" she asked.

"I guess I can blanket my horse and stand him under the wood-shed," answered the young man, going around to the animal's head and leading him away.

When he returned to the door the girl opened it, as if she had been listening for his step; and she now stood holding it ajar for him to enter, and throwing the light upon the threshold from the lamp, which she lifted high in the other hand. The action brought her figure in relief, and revealed the outline of her bust and shoulders, while the lamp flooded with light the face she turned to him, and again averted for a moment, as if startled at

some noise behind her. She thus showed a smooth, low forehead, lips and cheeks deeply red, a softly rounded chin touched with a faint dimple, and in turn a nose short and aquiline; her eyes were dark, and her dusky hair flowed crinkling above her fine black brows, and vanished down the curve of a lovely neck. A peculiar charm lay in the form of her upper lip: it was exquisitely arched, and at the corners it projected a little over the lower lip, so that when she smiled it gave a piquant sweetness to her mouth, with a certain demure innocence that qualified the Roman pride of her profile. For the rest, her beauty was of the kind that coming years would only ripen and enrich; at thirty she would be even handsomer than at twenty, and be all the more southern in her type for the paling of that northern colour in her cheeks. The young man who looked up at her from the door-step had a yellow moustache, shadowing either side of his lip with a broad sweep, like a bird's wing; his chin, deep-cut below his mouth, failed to come strenuously forward; his cheeks were filled to an oval contour, and his face had otherwise the regularity common to Americans; his eyes, a clouded grey, heavy-lidded and long-lashed, were his most striking feature, and he gave her beauty a deliberate look from them as he lightly stamped the snow from his feet, and pulled the seal-skin gloves from his long hands.

"Come in," she whispered, colouring with pleasure under his gaze; and she made haste to shut the door after him, with a luxurious impatience of the cold. She led the way into the room from which she had come, and set down the lamp on the corner of the piano, while he slipped off his overcoat and swung it over the end of the sofa. They drew up chairs to the stove, in which the smouldering fire, revived by the opened draught, roared and snapped. It was midnight, as the sharp strokes of a wooden clock declared from the kitchen, and they were alone together, and all the other inmates of the house were asleep. The situation, scarcely conceivable to another civilisation, is so common in ours, where youth commands its fate, and trusts solely to itself, that it may be said to be characteristic of the New-England civilisation wherever it keeps its simplicity. It was not stolen or clandestine; it would have interested every one, but would have shocked no one in the village, if the whole village had known it; all that a girl's parents ordinarily exacted was that they should not be waked up.

"Ugh!" said the girl. "It seems as if I never should get warm."

She leaned forward, and stretched her hands toward the stove, and he presently rose from the rocking-chair in which he sat, somewhat lower

than she, and lifted her sack to throw it over her shoulders. But he put it down and took up his overcoat.

"Allow my coat the pleasure," he said, with the ease of a man who is not too far lost to be readily flattering.

"Much obliged to the coat," she replied, shrugging herself into it and pulling the collar close about her throat. "I wonder you didn't put it on the sorrel. You could have tied the sleeves around her neck."

"Shall I tie them around yours?" He leaned forward from the low rocking-chair, into which he had sunk again, and made a feint at what he had proposed.

But she drew back with a gay "No!" and added: "Some day, father says, that sorrel will be the death of us. He says it's a bad colour for a horse. They're always ugly, and when they get heated they're crazy."

"You never seem to be very much frightened when you're riding after the sorrel," said Bartley.

"Oh, I've great faith in your driving."

"Thanks. But I don't believe in this notion about a horse being vicious because he's of a certain colour. If your father didn't believe in it, I should call it a superstition; but the Squire has no superstitions."

"I don't know about that," said the girl. "I don't think he likes to see the new moon over his left shoulder."

"I beg his pardon, then," returned Bartley. "I ought to have said religions: the Squire has no religions."

The young fellow had a rich caressing voice, and a securely winning manner which comes from the habit of easily pleasing; in this charming tone, and with this delightful insinuation, he often said things that hurt; but with such a humorous glance from his softly shaded eyes that people felt in some sort flattered at being taken into the joke, even while they winced under it.

The girl seemed to wince, as if, in spite of her familiarity with the fact, it wounded her to have her father's scepticism recognised just then. She said nothing, and he added—

"I remember we used to think that a red-headed boy was worse-tempered on account of his hair. But I don't believe the sorrel-tops, as we called them, were any more fiery than the rest of us."

Marcia did not answer at once, and then she said, with the vagueness of one not greatly interested by the subject—

"You 've got a sorrel-top in your office that 's fiery enough, if she 's anything like what she used to be when she went to school."

"Hannah Morrison?"

"Yes."

"Oh, she isn't so bad. She's pretty lively, but she's very eager to learn the business, and I guess we shall get along. I think she wants to please me."

"*Does* she! But she must be going on seventeen now."

"I dare say," answered the young man carelessly, but with perfect intelligence. "She's good-looking in her way too."

"Oh! Then you admire red hair?"

He perceived the anxiety that the girl's pride could not keep out of her tone, but he answered indifferently—

"I'm a little too near that colour myself. I hear that red hair's coming into fashion, but I guess it's natural I should prefer black."

She leaned back in her chair, and crushed the velvet collar of his coat under her neck in lifting her head to stare at the high-hung mezzotints and family photographs on the walls, while a flattered smile parted her lips, and there was a little thrill of joy in her voice—

"I presume we must be a good deal behind the age in everything at Equity."

"Well, you know my opinion of Equity," returned the young man. "If I didn't have you here to free

my mind to once in a while, I don't know what I should do."

She was so proud to be in the secret of his discontent with the narrow world of Equity that she tempted him to disparage it further by pretending to identify herself with it.

"I don't see why you abuse Equity to me. I've never been anywhere else, except those two winters at school. You'd better look out: I might expose you," she threatened fondly.

"I'm not afraid. Those two winters make a great difference. You saw girls from other places—from Augusta, and Bangor, and Bath."

"Well, I couldn't see how they were so very different from Equity girls."

"I dare say they couldn't either, if they judged from you."

She leaned forward again, and begged for more flattery from him with her happy eyes.

"Why, what *does* make me so different from all the rest? I should really like to know."

"Oh, you don't expect me to tell you to your face!"

"Yes, to my face! I don't believe it's anything complimentary."

"No, it's nothing that you deserve any credit for."

"Pshaw!" cried the girl. "I know you're only talking to make fun of me. How do I know but

you make fun of me to other girls, just as you do of them to me? Everybody says you 're sarcastic."

"Have I ever been sarcastic with you?"

"You know I wouldn't stand it."

He made no reply, but she admired the ease with which he now turned from her, and took one book after another from the table at his elbow, saying some words of ridicule about each. It gave her a still deeper sense of his intellectual command when he finally discriminated, and began to read out a poem with studied elocutionary effects. He read in a low tone, but at last some responsive noises came from the room overhead; he closed the book, and threw himself into an attitude of deprecation, with his eyes cast up to the ceiling.

"Chicago," he said, laying the book on the table, and taking his knee between his hands, while he dazzled her by speaking from the abstraction of one who has carried on a train of thought quite different from that on which he seemed to be intent,— "Chicago is the place for me. I don't think I can stand Equity much longer. You know that chum of mine I told you about; he 's written to me to come out there and go into the law with him at once."

"Why don't you go?" the girl forced herself to ask.

"Oh, I 'm not ready yet. Should you write to me if I went to Chicago?"

"I don't think you'd find my letters very interesting. You wouldn't want any news from Equity."

"Your letters wouldn't be interesting if you gave me the Equity news; but they would if you left it out. Then you'd have to write about yourself."

"Oh, I don't think that would interest anybody."

"Well, I feel almost like going out to Chicago to see."

"But I haven't promised to write yet," said the girl, laughing for joy in his humour.

"I shall have to stay in Equity till you do, then. Better promise at once."

"Wouldn't that be too much like marrying a man to get rid of him?"

"I don't think that's always such a bad plan—for the man."

He waited for her to speak; but she had gone the length of her tether in this direction.

"Byron says:

> 'Man's love is of man's life a thing apart—
> 'Tis woman's whole existence.'

Do you believe that?" He dwelt upon her with his free look, in the happy embarrassment with which she let her head droop.

"I don't know," she murmured. "I don't know anything about a man's life."

"It was the woman's I was asking about."

"I don't think I 'm competent to answer."

"Well, I 'll tell you, then. I think Byron was mistaken. My experience is that when a man is in love, there 's nothing else of him. That 's the reason I 've kept out of it altogether of late years. My advice is, Don't fall in love: it takes too much time." They both laughed at this. "But about corresponding, now; you haven't said whether you would write to me, or not. Will you?"

"Can't you wait and see?" she asked, slanting a look at him, which she could not keep from being fond.

"No, no. Unless you wrote to me I couldn't go to Chicago."

"Perhaps, I ought to promise, then, at once."

"You mean that you wish me to go."

"You said that you were going. You oughtn't to let anything stand in the way of your doing the best you can for yourself."

"But you would miss me a little, wouldn't you? You would try to miss me, now and then?"

"Oh, you are here pretty often. I don't think I should have much difficulty in missing you."

"Thanks, thanks! I can go with a light heart, now.—Good-bye."

He made a pretence of rising.

"What! Are you going at once?"

"Yes, this very night—or to-morrow. Or no, I

can't go to-morrow. There 's something I was going to do to-morrow."

"Perhaps go to church."

"Oh, that of course. But it was in the afternoon. Stop! I have it! I want you to go sleigh-riding with me in the afternoon."

"I don't know about that," Marcia began.

"But I do," said the young man. "Hold on: I 'll put my request in writing." He opened her portfolio, which lay on the table. "What elegant stationery! May I use some of this elegant stationery? The letter is to a lady—to open a correspondence. May I?" She laughed her assent. "How ought I to begin? Dearest Miss Marcia, or just Dear Marcia: which is better?"

"You had better not put either—"

"But I must. You 're one or the other, you know. You 're dear,—to your family,—and you 're Marcia: you can't deny it. The only question is whether you 're the dearest of all the Miss Marcias. I may be mistaken, you know. We 'll err on the safe side: Dear Marcia." He wrote it down. "That looks well, and it reads well. It looks very natural, and it reads like poetry—blank verse; there 's no rhyme for it that I can remember. Dear Marcia: Will you go sleigh-riding with me to-morrow afternoon, at two o'clock sharp? Yours—yours? sincerely, or cordially, or affectionately, or what? The 'Dear

Marcia' seems to call for something out of the common. I think it had better be 'affectionately.'" He suggested it with ironical gravity.

"And *I* think it had better be 'truly,'" protested the girl.

"'Truly' it shall be then. Your word is law—statute in such case made and provided." He wrote, "With unutterable devotion, yours truly, Bartley J. Hubbard," and read it aloud.

She leaned forward, and lightly caught it away from him, and made a feint of tearing it. He seized her hands.

"Mr. Hubbard!" she cried, in undertone. "Let me go, please."

"On two conditions—promise not to tear up my letter, and promise to answer it in writing."

She hesitated long, letting him hold her wrists. At last she said, "Well," and he released her wrists, on whose whiteness his clasp left red circles. She settled her bracelets over these, and as she tore off a scrap of paper she said—

"Who would think, to see you anywhere else, that you were such a case to carry on?"

"Nobody! That is my secret—my little joke. Respect it; and answer my letter."

She wrote a single word on the paper, and pushed it across the table to him. He rose with it, and went around to her side.

"This is very nice. But you haven't spelt it correctly. Anybody would say this was *No*, to look at it; and you meant to write *Yes*. Take the pencil in your hand, Miss Gaylord, and I will steady your trembling nerves, so that you can form the characters. Stop! At the slightest resistance on your part, I will call out and alarm the house; or I will—" He put the pencil into her fingers, and took her soft fist into his, and changed the word, while she submitted, helpless with her smothered laughter. "Now the address. Dear—"

"No, no!" she protested.

"Yes, yes! 'Dear Mr. Hubbard.' There, that will do. Now the signature. Yours—"

"I *won't* write that. I won't indeed!"

"Oh, yes, you will. You only think you won't. 'Yours gratefully, Marcia Gaylord.' That's right. The Gaylord is not very legible, on account of a slight tremor in the writer's arm, resulting from a constrained posture, perhaps. Thanks, Miss Gaylord. I will be here promptly at the hour indicated—"

The noises renewed themselves overhead; some one seemed to be moving about. Hubbard laid his hand on that of the girl, still resting on the table, and grasped it in burlesque alarm; she could scarcely stifle her mirth. He released her hand, and reaching his chair with a theatrical stride, sat there

cowering till the noises ceased. Then he began to speak soberly, in a low voice. He spoke of himself; but in application of a lecture which they had lately heard, so that he seemed to be speaking of the lecture. It was on the formation of character, and he told of the processes by which he had formed his own character. They appeared very wonderful to her, and she marvelled at the ease with which he dismissed the frivolity of his recent mood, and was now all seriousness. When he came to speak of the influence of others upon him, she almost trembled with the intensity of her interest.

"But of all the women I have known, Marcia," he said, "I believe you have had the strongest influence upon me. I believe you could make me do anything; but you have always influenced me for good; your influence upon me has been ennobling and elevating."

She wished to refuse his praise; but her heart throbbed for bliss and pride in it; her voice dissolved on her lips. They sat in silence; and he took in his the hand that she let hang over the side of her chair.

The lamp began to burn low, and she found words to say, "I had better get another," but she did not move.

"No—don't," he said; "I must be going too. Look at the wick, there, Marcia; it scarcely reaches

the oil. In a little while it will not reach it, and the flame will die out. That is the way the ambition to be good and great will die out of me, when my life no longer draws its inspiration from your influence."

This figure took her imagination; it seemed to her very beautiful; and his praise humbled her more and more.

"Good-night," he said, in a low, sad voice. He gave her hand a last pressure, and rose to put on his coat. Her admiration of his words, her happiness in his flattery, filled her brain like wine. She moved dizzily as she took up the lamp to light him to the door. "I have tired you," he said tenderly, and he passed his hand around her to sustain the elbow of the arm with which she held the lamp; she wished to protest against his embrace, but she could not try.

At the door he bent down his head and kissed her. "Good-night, dear—friend."

"Good-night," she panted, and after the door had closed upon him, she stooped and kissed the knob on which his hand had rested.

As she turned, she started to see her father coming down the stairs with a candle in his hand. He had his black cravat tied round his throat, but no collar; otherwise, he had on the rusty black clothes in which he ordinarily went about his affairs; the

cassimere pantaloons, the satin vest, and the dress-coat which old-fashioned country lawyers still wore ten years ago, in preference to a frock or sack. He stopped on one of the lower steps, and looked sharply down into her uplifted face, and as they stood confronted, their consanguinity came out in vivid resemblances and contrasts; his high, hawk-like profile was translated into the fine aquiline outline of hers; the harsh rings of black hair, now grizzled with age, which clustered tightly over his head, except where they had retreated from his deeply seamed and wrinkled forehead, were the crinkled flow above her smooth white brow; and the line of the bristly tufts that overhung his eyes was the same as that of the low arches above hers. Her complexion was from her mother; his skin was dusky yellow; but they had the same mouth, and hers showed how sweet his mouth must have been in his youth. His eyes, deep sunk in their cavernous sockets, had rekindled their dark fires in hers; his whole visage, softened to her sex and girlish years, looked up at him in his daughter's face.

"Why, father! Did we wake you?"

"No. I hadn't been asleep at all. I was coming down to read. But it's time you were in bed, Marcia."

"Yes, I'm going now. There's a good fire in the parlour stove."

The old man descended the remaining steps, but turned at the parlour door, and looked again at his daughter with a glance that arrested her, with her foot on the lowest stair.

"Marcia," he asked grimly, "are you engaged to Bartley Hubbard?"

The blood flashed up from her heart into her face like fire, and then, as suddenly, fell back again, and left her white. She let her head droop and turn, till her eyes were wholly averted from him, and she did not speak. He closed the door behind him, and she went up-stairs to her own room; in her shame, she seemed to herself to crawl thither, with her father's glance burning upon her.

II.

BARTLEY HUBBARD drove his sorrel colt back to the hotel stable through the moonlight, and woke up the hostler, asleep behind the counter, on a bunk covered with buffalo-robes. The half-grown boy did not wake easily; he conceived of the affair as a joke, and bade Bartley quit his fooling, till the young man took him by his collar, and stood him on his feet. Then he fumbled about the button of the lamp, turned low and smelling rankly, and lit his lantern, which contributed a rival stench to the choking air. He kicked together the embers that smouldered on the hearth of the Franklin stove, sitting down before it for his greater convenience, and having put a fresh pine-root on the fire, fell into a doze, with his lantern in his hand. "Look here, young man!" said Bartley, shaking him by the shoulder, "you had better go out and put that colt up, and leave this sleeping before the fire to me."

"Guess the colt can wait a while," grumbled the boy, but he went out, all the same, and Bartley, looking through the window, saw his lantern waver-

ing, a yellow blot in the white moonshine, toward the stable. He sat down in the hostler's chair, and, in his turn, kicked the pine-root with the heel of his shoe, and looked about the room. He had had, as he would have said, a grand good time; but it had left him hungry, and the table in the middle of the room, with the chairs huddled around it, was suggestive, though he knew that it had been barrenly put there for the convenience of the landlord's friends, who came every night to play whist with him, and that nothing to eat or drink had ever been set out on it to interrupt the austere interest of the game. It was long since there had been anything on the shelves behind the counter more cheerful than corn-balls and fancy crackers for the children of the summer boarders; these dainties being out of the season, the jars now stood there empty. The young man waited in a hungry reverie, in which it appeared to him that he was undergoing unmerited suffering, till the stable-boy came back, now wide awake, and disposed to let the house share his vigils, as he stamped over the floor in his heavy boots.

"Andy," said Bartley, in a pathetic tone of injury, "can't you scare me up something to eat?"

"There ain't anything in the buttery but meat-pie," said the boy.

He meant mince-pie, as Hubbard knew, and not a pasty of meat; and the hungry man hesitated.

"Well, fetch it," he said finally. "I guess we can warm it up a little by the coals here."

He had not been so long out of college but the idea of this irregular supper, when he had once formed it, began to have its fascination. He took up the broad fire-shovel, and, by the time the boy had shuffled to and from the pantry beyond the dining-room, Bartley had cleaned the shovel with a piece of newspaper, and was already heating it by the embers which he had raked out from under the pine-root. The boy silently transferred the half-pie he had brought from its plate to the shovel. He pulled up a chair and sat down to watch it. The pie began to steam and send out a savoury odour; he himself, in thawing, emitted a stronger and stronger smell of stable. He was not without his disdain for the palate which must have its mince-pie warm at midnight—nor without his respect for it, either. This fastidious taste must be part of the splendour which showed itself in Mr. Hubbard's city-cut clothes, and in his neck-scarfs, and the perfection of his finger-nails and moustache. The boy had felt the original impression of these facts deepened rather than effaced by custom; they were for every day, and not, as he had at first conjectured, for some great occasion only.

"You don't suppose, Andy, there is such a thing as cold tea or coffee anywhere, that we could warm

up?" asked Bartley, gazing thoughtfully at the pie.

The boy shook his head.

"Get you some milk," he said; and, after he had let the dispiriting suggestion sink into the other's mind, he added, "or some water."

"Oh, bring on the milk," groaned Bartley, but with the relief that a choice of evils affords.

The boy stumped away for it, and when he came back the young man had got his pie on the plate again, and had drawn his chair up to the table. "Thanks," he said, with his mouth full, as the boy set down the goblet of milk. Andy pulled his chair round so as to get an unrestricted view of a man who ate his pie with his fork as easily as another would with a knife. "That sister of yours is a smart girl," the young man added, making deliberate progress with the pie.

The boy made an inarticulate sound of satisfaction, and resolved in his heart to tell her what Mr. Hubbard had said.

"She's as smart as time," continued Bartley.

This was something concrete. The boy knew he should remember that comparison.

"Bring you anything else?" he asked, admiring the young man's skill in getting the last flakes of the crust on his fork. The pie had now vanished.

"Why, there isn't anything else, is there?" Bartley

demanded, with the plaintive dismay of a man who fears he has flung away his hunger upon one dish when he might have had something better.

"Cheese," replied the boy.

"Oh!" said Bartley. He reflected a while. "I suppose I could toast a piece on this fork. But there isn't any more milk."

The boy took away the plate and goblet, and brought them again replenished.

Bartley contrived to get the cheese on his fork and rest it against one of the andirons so that it would not fall into the ashes. When it was done, he ate it as he had eaten the pie, without offering to share his feast with the boy.

"There!" he said. "Yes, Andy, if she keeps on as she's been doing, she won't have any trouble. She's a bright girl."

He stretched his legs before the fire again, and presently yawned.

"Want your lamp, Mr. Hubbard?" asked the boy.

"Well, yes, Andy," the young man consented. "I suppose I may as well go to bed."

But, when the boy brought his lamp, he still remained with outstretched legs in front of the fire. Speaking of Hannah Morrison made him think of Marcia again, and of the way in which she had spoken of the girl. He lolled his head on one side in such comfort as a young man finds in the convic-

tion that a pretty girl is not only fond of him, but is instantly jealous of any other girl whose name is mentioned. He smiled at the flame in his reverie, and the boy examined, with clandestine minuteness, the set and pattern of his trousers, with glances of reference and comparison at his own.

There were many things about his relations with Marcia Gaylord which were calculated to give Bartley satisfaction. She was, without question, the prettiest girl in the place, and she had more style than any other girl began to have. He liked to go into a room with Marcia Gaylord; it was some pleasure. Marcia was a lady; she had a good education; she had been away two years at school; and, when she came back at the end of the second winter, he knew that she had fallen in love with him at sight. He believed that he could time it to a second. He remembered how he had looked up at her as he passed, and she had reddened and tried to turn away from the window as if she had not seen him. Bartley was still free as air; but if he could once make up his mind to settle down in a hole like Equity, he could have her by turning his hand. Of course she had her drawbacks, like everybody. She was proud, and she would be jealous; but, with all her pride and her distance, she had let him kiss her; and with not a word on his part that any one could hold him to.

"Hollo!" he cried, with a suddenness that startled the boy, who had finished his meditation upon Bartley's trousers, and was now deeply dwelling on his boots. "Do you like 'em? See what sort of a shine you can give 'em for Sunday-go-to-meeting to-morrow morning." He put out his hand and laid hold of the boy's head, passing his fingers through the thick red hair. "Sorrel-top!" he said, with a grin of agreeable reminiscence. "They emptied all the freckles they had left into your face—didn't they, Andy?"

This free, joking way of Bartley's was one of the things that made him popular; he passed the time of day, and was give-and-take right along, as his admirers expressed it, from the first, in a community where his smartness had that honour which gives us more smart men to the square mile than any other country in the world. The fact of his smartness had been affirmed and established in the strongest manner by the authorities of the college at which he was graduated, in answer to the reference he made to them when negotiating with the committee in charge for the place he now held as editor of the Equity *Free Press*. The faculty spoke of the solidity and variety of his acquirements, and the distinction with which he had acquitted himself in every branch of study he had undertaken. They added that he deserved the greater credit, because his early dis-

advantages as an orphan, dependent on his own exertions for a livelihood, had been so great that he had entered college with difficulty and with heavy conditions. This turned the scale with a committee who had all been poor boys themselves, and justly feared the encroachments of hereditary aristocracy. They perhaps had their misgivings when the young man, in his well-blacked boots, his grey trousers neatly fitting over them, and his diagonal coat buttoned high with one button, stood before them with his thumbs in his waistcoat-pockets, and looked down over his moustache at the floor with sentiments concerning their wisdom which they could not explore; they must have resented the fashionable keeping of everything about him, for Bartley wore his one suit as if it were but one of many; but when they understood that he had come by everything through his own unaided smartness, they could no longer hesitate. One, indeed, still felt it a duty to call attention to the fact that the college authorities said nothing of the young man's moral characteristics in a letter dwelling so largely upon his intellectual qualifications. The others referred this point by a silent look to Squire Gaylord.

"I don't know," said the Squire, "as I ever heard that a great deal of morality was required by a newspaper editor." The rest laughed at the joke, and the Squire continued: "But I guess if he worked

his own way through college, as they say, that he hain't had time to be up to a great deal of mischief. You know it 's for idle hands that the devil provides, doctor."

"That 's true as far as it goes," said the doctor. "But it isn't the whole truth. The devil provides for some busy hands too."

"There 's a good deal of sense in that," the Squire admitted, "the worst scamps I ever knew were active fellows. Still, industry is in a man's favour. If the faculty knew anything against this young man they would have given us a hint of it. I guess we had better take him; we sha'n't do better. Is it a vote?"

The good opinion of Bartley's smartness which Squire Gaylord had formed was confirmed some months later by the development of the fact that the young man did not regard his management of the Equity *Free Press* as a final vocation. The story went that he lounged into the lawyer's office one Saturday afternoon in October, and asked him to let him take his Blackstone into the woods with him. He came back with it a few hours later.

"Well, sir," said the attorney sardonically, "how much Blackstone have you read?"

"About forty pages," answered the young man, dropping into one of the empty chairs, and hanging his leg over the arm.

The lawyer smiled, and opening the book, asked

half a dozen questions at random. Bartley answered without changing his indifferent countenance, or the careless posture he had fallen into. A sharper and longer examination followed; the very language seemed to have been unbrokenly transferred to his mind, and he often gave the author's words as well as his ideas.

"Ever looked at this before?" asked the lawyer, with a keen glance at him over his spectacles.

"No," said Bartley, gaping as if bored, and further relieving his weariness by stretching. He was without deference for any presence; and the old lawyer did not dislike him for this: he had no deference himself.

"You think of studying law?" he asked, after a pause.

"That's what I came to ask you about," said Bartley, swinging his leg.

The elder recurred to his book, and put some more questions. Then he said:

"Do you want to study with me?"

"That's about the size of it."

He shut the book, and pushed it on the table toward the young man.

"Go ahead. You'll get along—if you don't get along too easily."

It was in the spring after this that Marcia returned home from her last term at boarding-school, and first saw him.

III.

BARTLEY woke on Sunday morning with the regrets that a supper of mince-pie and toasted cheese is apt to bring. He woke from a bad dream, and found that he had a dull headache. A cup of coffee relieved his pain, but it left him listless, and with a longing for sympathy which he experienced in any mental or physical discomfort. The frankness with which he then appealed for compassion was one of the things that made people like him; he flung himself upon the pity of the first he met. It might be some one to whom he had said a cutting or mortifying thing at their last encounter, but Bartley did not mind that; what he desired was commiseration, and he confidingly ignored the past in a trust that had rarely been abused. If his sarcasm proved that he was quick and smart, his recourse to those who had suffered from it proved that he did not mean anything by what he said; it showed that he was a man of warm feelings, and that his heart was in the right place.

Bartley deplored his disagreeable sensations to the

other boarders at breakfast, and affectionately excused himself to them for not going to church, when they turned into the office, and gathered there before the Franklin stove, sensible of the day in freshly shaven chins and newly blacked boots. The habit of church-going was so strong and universal in Equity that even strangers stopping at the hotel found themselves the object of a sort of hospitable competition with the members of the different denominations, who took it for granted that they would wish to go somewhere; and only suffered them a choice between sects. There was no intolerance in their offer of pews, but merely a profound expectation, and one might continue to choose his place of worship Sabbath after Sabbath without offence. This was Bartley's custom; and it had worked to his favour rather than his disadvantage; for in the rather chaotic liberality into which religious sentiment had fallen in Equity, it was tacitly conceded that the editor of a paper devoted to the interests of the whole town ought not to be of fixed theological opinions.

Religion there had largely ceased to be a fact of spiritual experience, and the visible church flourished on condition of providing for the social needs of the community. It was practically held that the salvation of one's soul must not be made too depressing, or the young people would have nothing to do with

it. Professors of the sternest creeds temporised with sinners, and did what might be done to win them to heaven by helping them to have a good time here. The church embraced and included the world. It no longer frowned even upon social dancing—a transgression once so heinous in its eyes; it opened its doors to popular lectures, and encouraged secular music in its basements, where, during the winter, oyster-suppers were given in aid of good objects. The Sunday-school was made particularly attractive, both to the children and the young men and girls who taught them. Not only at Thanksgiving, but at Christmas, and latterly even at Easter, there were special observances, which the enterprising spirits having the welfare of the church at heart tried to make significant and agreeable to all, and promotive of good feeling. Christenings and marriages in the church were encouraged, and elaborately celebrated; death alone, though treated with cut flowers in emblematic devices, refused to lend itself to the cheerful intentions of those who were struggling to render the idea of another and a better world less repulsive. In contrast with the relaxation and uncertainty of their doctrinal aim, the rude and bold infidelity of old Squire Gaylord had the greater affinity with the mood of the Puritanism they had outgrown. But Bartley Hubbard liked the religious situation well enough. He took

a leading part in the entertainments, and did something to impart to them a literary cast, as in the series of readings from the poets which he gave, the first winter, for the benefit of each church in turn. At these lectures he commended himself to the sober elders, who were troubled by the levity of his behaviour with young people on other occasions, by asking one of the ministers to open the exercises with prayer, and another, at the close, to invoke the Divine blessing; there was no especial relevancy in this, but it pleased. He kept himself, from the beginning, pretty constantly in the popular eye. He was a speaker at all public meetings, where his declamation was admired, and at private parties, where the congealed particles of village society were united in a frozen mass, he was the first to break the ice, and set the angular fragments grating and grinding upon one another.

He now went to his room, and opened his desk, with some vague purposes of bringing up the arrears of his correspondence. Formerly, before his interest in the newspaper had lapsed at all, he used to give his Sunday leisure to making selections and writing paragraphs for it; but he now let the pile of exchanges lie unopened on his desk, and began to rummage through the letters scattered about in it. They were mostly from young ladies with whom he had corresponded, and some of them enclosed the

photographs of the writers, doing their best to look as they hoped he might think they looked. They were not love-letters, but were of that sort which the laxness of our social life invites young people, who have met pleasantly, to exchange as long as they like, without explicit intentions on either side; they commit the writers to nothing; they are commonly without result, except in wasting time which is hardly worth saving. Every one who has lived the American life must have produced them in great numbers. While youth lasts, they afford an excitement whose charm is hard to realise afterward.

Bartley's correspondents were young ladies of his college town, where he had first begun to see something of social life in days which he now recognised as those of his green youth. They were not so very far removed in point of time; but the experience of a larger world in the vacation he had spent with a Boston student had relegated them to a moral remoteness that could not readily be measured. His friend was the son of a family who had diverted him from the natural destiny of a Boston man at Harvard, and sent him elsewhere for sectarian reasons. They were rich people, devout in their way, and benevolent, after a fashion of their own; and their son always brought home with him, for the holidays and other short vacations, some fellow-student accounted worthy of their hospitality through his

religious intentions or his intellectual promise. These guests were indicated to the young man by one of the faculty, and he accepted their companionship for the time with that perfunctory civility he could muster. He and Bartley had amused themselves very well during that vacation. The Hallecks were not fashionable people, but they lived wealthily: they had a coachman and an inside man (whom Bartley at first treated with a consideration which it afterward mortified him to think of); their house was richly furnished with cushioned seats, dense carpets, and heavy curtains; and they were visited by other people of their denomination and of a like abundance. Some of these were infected with the prevailing culture of the city, and the young ladies especially dressed in a style and let fall ideas that filled the soul of the country student with wonder and worship. He heard a great deal of talk that he did not understand; but he eagerly treasured every impression, and pieced it out, by question or furtive observation, into an image often shrewdly true, and often grotesquely untrue, to the conditions into which he had been dropped. He civilised himself as rapidly as his light permitted. There was a great deal of church-going; but he and young Halleck went also to lectures and concerts; they even went to the opera, and Bartley, with the privity of his friend, went to the theatre. Halleck said that he

did not think there was much harm in a play; but that his people stayed away for the sake of the example—a reason that certainly need not hold with Bartley.

At the end of the vacation he returned to college, leaving his measure with Halleck's tailor, and his heart with all the splendours and elegancies of the town. He found the ceilings very low and the fashions much belated in the village; but he reconciled himself as well as he could. The real stress came when he left college and the question of doing something for himself pressed upon him. He intended to study law, but he must meantime earn his living. It had been his fortune to be left, when very young, not only an orphan, but an extremely pretty child, with an exceptional aptness for study; and he had been better cared for than if his father and mother had lived. He had been not only well housed and fed, and very well dressed, but pitied as an orphan, and petted for his beauty and talent, while he was always taught to think of himself as a poor boy who was winning his own way through the world. But when his benefactor proposed to educate him for the ministry, with a view to his final use in missionary work, he revolted. He apprenticed himself to the printer of his village, and rapidly picked up a knowledge of the business, so that at nineteen he had laid by some money, and was able to think

of going to college. There was a fund in aid of indigent students in the Institution to which he turned, and the faculty favoured him. He finished his course with great credit to himself and the college, and he was naturally inclined to look upon what had been done for him earlier as an advantage taken of his youthful inexperience. He rebelled against the memory of that tutelage, in spite of which he had accomplished such great things. If he had not squandered his time or fallen into vicious courses in circumstances of so much discouragement; if he had come out of it all self-reliant and independent, he knew whom he had to thank for it. The worst of the matter was that there was some truth in all this.

The ardour of his satisfaction cooled in the two years following his graduation, when in intervals of teaching country schools he was actually reduced to work at his trade on a village newspaper. But it was as a practical printer, through the freemasonry of the craft, that Bartley heard of the wish of the Equity committee to place the *Free Press* in new hands, and he had to be grateful to his trade for a primary consideration from them which his collegiate honours would not have won him. There had not yet begun to be that talk of journalism as a profession which has since prevailed with our collegians; and if Bartley had thought, as other collegians think,

of devoting himself to newspaper life, he would have turned his face toward the city where its prizes are won—the ten and fifteen dollar reporterships for which a four years' course of the classics is not too costly a preparation. But, to tell the truth, he had never regarded his newspaper as anything but a make-shift, by which he was to be carried over a difficult and anxious period of his life, and enabled to attempt something worthier his powers. He had no illusions concerning it; if he had ever thought of journalism as a grand and ennobling profession, these ideas had perished in his experience in a village printing-office. He came to his work in Equity with practical and immediate purposes which pleased the committee better. The paper had been established some time before, in one of those flurries of ambition which from time to time seized Equity, when its citizens reflected that it was the central town in the county, and yet not the shire-town. The question of the removal of the county-seat had periodically arisen before; but it had never been so hotly agitated as now. The paper had been a happy thought of a local politician, whose conception of its management was that it might be easily edited by a committee, if a printer could be found to publish it; but a few months' experience had made the *Free Press* a terrible burden to its founders; it could not be sustained, and it could not be let die without

final disaster to the interests of the town; and the committee began to cast about for a publisher who could also be editor. Bartley, to whom it fell, could not be said to have thrown his heart and soul into the work, but he threw all his energy, and he made it more than its friends could have hoped. He espoused the cause of Equity in the pending question with the zeal of a *condottiere*, and did service no less faithful because of the cynical quality latent in it. When the legislative decision against Equity put an end to its ambitious hopes for the time being, he continued in control of the paper, with a fair prospect of getting the property into his own hands at last, and with some growing question in his mind whether, after all, it might not be as easy for him to go into politics from the newspaper as from the law. He managed the office very economically, and by having the work done by girl apprentices, with the help of one boy, he made it self-supporting. He modelled the newspaper upon the modern conception, through which the country press must cease to have any influence in public affairs, and each paper become little more than an open letter of neighbourhood gossip. But while he filled his sheet with minute chronicles of the goings and comings of unimportant persons, and with all attainable particulars of the ordinary life of the different localities, he continued to make spicy

hits at the enemies of Equity in the late struggle, and kept the public spirit of the town alive. He had lately undertaken to make known its advantages as a summer resort, and had published a series of encomiums upon the beauty of its scenery and the healthfulness of its air and water, which it was believed would put it in a position of rivalry with some of the famous White Mountain places. He invited the enterprise of outside capital, and advocated a narrow-gauge road up the valley of the river through the Notch, so as to develop the picturesque advantages of that region. In all this the colour of mockery let the wise perceive that Bartley saw the joke and enjoyed it, and it deepened the popular impression of his smartness.

This vein of cynicism was not characteristic, as it would have been in an older man; it might have been part of that spiritual and intellectual unruliness of youth, which people laugh at and forgive, and which one generally regards in after life as something almost alien to one's-self. He wrote long bragging articles about Equity, in a tone bordering on burlesque, and he had a department in his paper where he printed humorous squibs of his own and of other people; these were sometimes copied, and in the daily papers of the State he had been mentioned as "the funny man of the Equity *Free Press*." He also sent letters to one of the Boston

journals, which he reproduced in his own sheet, and which gave him an importance that the best endeavour as a country editor would never have won him with the villagers. He would naturally, as the local printer, have ranked a little above the foreman of the saw-mill in the social scale, and decidedly below the master of the Academy; but his personal qualities elevated him over the head even of the latter. But above all, the fact that he was studying law was a guaranty of his superiority that nothing else could have given; that science is the fountain of the highest distinction in a country town. Bartley's whole course implied that he was above editing the *Free Press*, but that he did it because it served his turn. That was admirable.

He sat a long time with these girls' letters before him, and lost himself in a pensive reverie over their photographs, and over the good times he used to have with them. He mused in that formless way in which a young man thinks about young girls; his soul is suffused with a sense of their sweetness and brightness, and unless he is distinctly in love there is no intention in his thoughts of them; even then there is often no intention. Bartley might very well have a good conscience about them; he had broken no hearts among them, and had only met them half-way in flirtation. What he really regretted, as he held their letters in his hand, was that he had never

got up a correspondence with two or three of the girls whom he had met in Boston. Though he had been cowed by their magnificence in the beginning, he had never had any reverence for them; he believed that they would have liked very well to continue his acquaintance; but he had not known how to open a correspondence, and the point was one on which he was ashamed to consult Halleck. These college belles, compared with them, were amusingly inferior; by a natural turn of thought, he realised that they were inferior to Marcia Gaylord too, in looks and style, no less than in an impassioned preference for himself. A distaste for their somewhat veteran ways in flirtation grew upon him as he thought of her; he philosophised against them to her advantage; he could not blame her if she did not know how to hide her feelings for him. His college training had been purely intellectual; it left his manners and morals untouched, and it seemed not to have concerned itself with his diction or accent; so far as his thoughts took shape in words, he thought slangily; and he now reflected that no girl had ever "gone for him" so before; yet he knew that Marcia was the right sort, and would rather have died than let him suppose that she cared for him, if she had known that she was doing it. The fun of it was, that she should not know; this charmed him, it touched him even; he did not

think of it exultingly, as the night before, but sweetly, fondly, and with a final curiosity to see her again, and enjoy the fact in her presence. The acrid little jets of smoke which escaped from the joints of his stove from time to time annoyed him; he shut his portfolio at last, and went out to walk.

IV.

THE forenoon sunshine, beating strong upon the thin snow along the edges of the porch floor, tattered them with a little thaw here and there; but it had no effect upon the hard packed levels of the street, up the middle of which he walked in a silence intensified by the muffled voices of exhortation that came to him out of the churches. It was in the very heart of sermon-time, and he had the whole street to himself on his way up to Squire Gaylord's house. As he drew near, he saw smoke ascending from the chimney of the lawyer's office—a little white building that stood apart from the dwelling on the left of the gate, and he knew that the old man was within, reading there, with his hat on and his long legs flung out toward the stove, unshaven and unkempt, in a grim protest against the prevalent Christian superstition. He might be reading Hume or Gibbon, or he might be reading the Bible—a book in which he was deeply versed, and from which he was furnished with texts for the demolition of its friends, his adversaries. He professed himself

a great admirer of its literature, and, in the heat of controversy, he often found himself a defender of its doctrines when he had occasion to expose the fallacy of latitudinarian interpretations. For liberal Christianity he had nothing but contempt, and refuted it with a scorn which spared none of the worldly tendencies of the church in Equity. The idea that souls were to be saved by church sociables filled him with inappeasable rancour; and he maintained the superiority of the old Puritanic discipline against them with a fervour which nothing but its re-establishment could have abated. It was said that Squire Gaylord's influence had largely helped to keep in place the last of the rigidly orthodox ministers, under whom his liberalising congregation chafed for years of discontent; but this was probably an exaggeration of the native humour. Mrs. Gaylord had belonged to this church, and had never formally withdrawn from it, and the lawyer always contributed to pay the minister's salary. He also managed a little property for him so well as to make him independent when he was at last asked to resign by his deacons.

In another mood Bartley might have stepped aside to look in on the Squire before asking at the house-door for Marcia. They relished each other's company, as people of contrary opinions and of no opinions are apt to do. Bartley loved to hear the

Squire get going, as he said, and the old man felt a fascination in the youngster. Bartley was smart; he took a point as quick as lightning; and the Squire did not mind his making friends with the Mammon of Righteousness, as he called the visible church in Equity. It amused him to see Bartley lending the church the zealous support of the press, with an impartial patronage of the different creeds. There had been times in his own career when the silence of his opinions would have greatly advanced him, but he had not chosen to pay this price for success; he liked his freedom, or he liked the bitter tang of his own tongue too well, and he had remained a leading lawyer in Equity, when he might have ended a judge, or even a Congressman. Of late years, however, since people whom he could have joined in their agnosticism so heartily, up to a certain point, had begun to make such fools of themselves about Darwinism and the brotherhood of all men in the monkey, he had grown much more tolerant. He still clung to his old-fashioned deistical opinions; but he thought no worse of a man for not holding them; he did not deny that a man might be a Christian, and still be a very good man.

The audacious humour of his position sufficed with a people who liked a joke rather better than anything else; in his old age his infidelity was something that would hardly have been

changed, if possible, by a popular vote. Even his wife, to whom it had once been a heavy cross, borne with secret prayer and tears, had long ceased to gainsay it in any wise. Her family had opposed her yoking with an unbeliever when she married him, but she had some such hopes of converting him as women cherish who give themselves to men confirmed in drunkenness. She learned, as other women do, that she could hardly change her husband in the least of his habits, and that, in this great matter of his unbelief, her love was powerless. It became easier at last for her to add self-sacrifice to self-sacrifice than to vex him with her anxieties about his soul, and to act upon the feeling that if he must be lost, then she did not care to be saved. He had never interfered with her church-going; he had rather promoted it, for he liked to have women go; but the time came when she no longer cared to go without him; she lapsed from her membership, and it was now many years since she had worshipped with the people of her faith, if, indeed, she were still of any faith. Her life was silenced in every way, and, as often happens with ageing wives in country towns, she seldom went out of her own door, and never appeared at the social or public solemnities of the village. Her husband and her daughter composed and bounded her world,—she always talked of them, or of other things as related to them. She

had grown an elderly woman, without losing the colour of her yellow hair; and the bloom of girlhood had been staid in her cheeks as if by the young habit of blushing, which she had kept. She was still what her neighbours called very pretty-appearing, and she must have been a beautiful girl. The silence of her inward life subdued her manner, till now she seemed always to have come from some place on which a deep hush had newly fallen.

She answered the door when Bartley turned the crank that snapped the gong-bell in its centre; and the young man, who was looking at the street while waiting for some one to come, confronted her with a start.

"Oh!" he said, "I thought it was Marcia. Good-morning, Mrs. Gaylord. Isn't Marcia at home?"

"She went to church, this morning," replied her mother. "Won't you walk in?"

"Why, yes, I guess I will, thank you," faltered Bartley, in the irresolution of his disappointment. "I hope I shan't disturb you."

"Come right into the sitting-room. She won't be gone a great while, now," said Mrs. Gaylord, leading the way to the large square room into which a door at the end of the narrow hall opened. A slumbrous heat from a sheet-iron wood-stove pervaded the place, and a clock ticked monotonously

on a shelf in the corner. Mrs. Gaylord said, "Won't you take a chair?" and herself sank into the rocker, with a deep feather cushion in the seat, and a thinner feather cushion tied halfway up the back. After the more active duties of her housekeeping were done, she sat every day in this chair with her knitting or sewing, and let the clock tick the long hours of her life away, with no more apparent impatience of them, or sense of their dulness, than the cat on the braided rug at her feet, or the geraniums in the pots at the sunny window.

"Are you pretty well to-day?" she asked.

"Well, no, Mrs. Gaylord, I'm not," answered Bartley. "I'm all out of sorts. I haven't felt so dyspeptic for I don't know how long."

Mrs. Gaylord smoothed the silk dress across her lap —the thin old black silk which she still instinctively put on for Sabbath observance, though it was so long since she had worn it to church.

"Mr. Gaylord used to have it when we were first married, though he ain't been troubled with it of late years. He seemed to think, then, it was worse Sundays."

"I don't believe Sunday has much to do with it in my case. I ate some mince-pie and some toasted cheese last night, and I guess they didn't agree with me very well," said Bartley, who did not spare himself the confession of his sins when seeking

sympathy: it was this candour that went so far to convince people of his good-heartedness.

"I don't know as I ever heard that meat-pie was bad," said Mrs. Gaylord, thoughtfully. "Mr. Gaylord used to eat it right along all through his dyspepsia, and he never complained of it. And the cheese ought to have made it digest."

"Well, I don't know what it was," replied Bartley, plaintively submitting to be exonerated, "but I feel perfectly used up. Oh, I suppose I shall get over it, or forget all about it, by to-morrow," he added, with strenuous cheerfulness. "It isn't anything worth minding."

Mrs. Gaylord seemed to differ with him on this point.

"Head ache any?" she asked.

"It did this morning, when I first woke up," Bartley assented.

"I don't believe but what a cup of tea would be the best thing for you," she said, critically.

Bartley had instinctively practised a social art which ingratiated him with people at Equity as much as his demands for sympathy endeared him: he gave trouble in little unusual ways. He now said—

"Oh, I wish you would give me a cup, Mrs. Gaylord."

"Why, yes, indeed! That's just what I was

going to," she replied. She went to the kitchen, which lay beyond another room, and re-appeared with the tea directly, proud of her promptness, but having it on her conscience to explain it. "I 'most always keep the pot on the stove hearth, Sunday morning, so 's to have ready if Mr. Gaylord ever wants a cup. He 's a master hand for tea, and always was. There: *I* guess you better take it without milk. I put some sugar in the saucer, if you want any." She dropped noiselessly upon her feather cushion again, and Bartley, who had risen to receive the tea from her remained standing while he drank it.

"That does seem to go to the spot," he said, as he sipped it, thoughtfully observant of its effect upon his disagreeable feelings. "I wish I had you to take care of me, Mrs. Gaylord, and keep me from making a fool of myself," he added, when he had drained the cup. "No, no!" he cried, at her offering to take it from him. "I 'll set it down. I know it will fret you to have it in here, and I 'll carry it out into the kitchen." He did so before she could prevent him, and came back, touching his moustache with his handkerchief. "I declare, Mrs. Gaylord, I should love to live in a kitchen like that."

"I guess you wouldn't if you had to," said Mrs. Gaylord, flattered into a smile. "Marcia, she likes to sit out there, she says, better than anywheres in

the house. But I always tell her it 's because she was there so much when she was little. I don't see as she seems over-anxious to do anything there *but* sit, I tell her. Not but what she knows how well enough. Mr. Gaylord, too, he's great for being 'round in the kitchen. If he gets up in the night, when he has his waking spells, he rather take his lamp out there, if there 's a fire left, and read, any time, than what he would in the parlour. Well, we used to sit there together a good deal when we were young, and he got the habit of it. There 's everything in habit," she added, thoughtfully. "Marcia, she 's got quite in the way, lately, of going to the Methodist church."

"Yes, I 've seen her there. You know I board 'round at the different churches, as the school-master used to at the houses in the old times."

Mrs. Gaylord looked up at the clock, and gave a little nervous laugh.

"I don't know what Marcia will say to my letting her company stay in the sitting-room. She 's pretty late to-day. But I guess you won't have much longer to wait, now."

She spoke with that awe of her daughter and her judgments which is one of the pathetic idiosyncrasies of a certain class of American mothers. They feel themselves to be not so well educated as their daughters, whose fancied knowledge of the world

they let outweigh their own experience of life; they are used to deferring to them, and they shrink willingly into household drudges before them, and leave them to order the social affairs of the family. Mrs. Gaylord was not much afraid of Bartley for himself, but as Marcia's company he made her more and more uneasy toward the end of the quarter of an hour in which she tried to entertain him with her simple talk, varying from Mr. Gaylord to Marcia, and from Marcia to Mr. Gaylord again. When she recognised the girl's quick touch in the closing of the front door, and her elastic step approached through the hall, the mother made a little deprecating noise in her throat, and fidgeted in her chair. As soon as Marcia opened the sitting-room door, Mrs. Gaylord modestly rose and went out into the kitchen: the mother who remained in the room when her daughter had company was an oddity almost unknown in Equity.

Marcia's face flashed all into a light of joy at sight of Bartley, who scarcely waited for her mother to be gone before he drew her towards him by the hand she had given. She mechanically yielded, and then, as if the recollection of some new resolution forced itself through her pleasure at sight of him, she freed her hand, and, retreating a step or two, confronted him.

"Why, Marcia," he said, "what's the matter?"

"Nothing," she answered.

It might have amused Bartley, if he had felt quite well, to see the girl so defiant of him, when she was really so much in love with him, but it certainly did not amuse him now: it disappointed him in his expectation of finding her femininely soft and comforting, and he did not know just what to do. He stood staring at her in discomfiture, while she gained in outward composure, though her cheeks were of the Jacqueminot red of the ribbon at her throat.

"What have I done, Marcia?" he faltered.

"Oh, you haven't done anything."

"Some one has been talking to you against me."

"No one has said a word to me about you."

"Then why are you so cold—so strange—so—so—different?"

"Different?"

"Yes, from what you were last night," he answered, with an aggrieved air.

"Oh, we see some things differently by daylight," she lightly explained. "Won't you sit down?"

"No, thank you," Bartley replied, sadly but unresentfully. "I think I had better be going. I see there is something wrong——"

"I don't see why you say there is anything wrong," she retorted. "What have *I* done?"

"Oh, you have not *done* anything; I take it back. It is all right. But when I came here this morning—encouraged—hoping—that you had

the same feeling as myself, and you seem to forget everything but a ceremonious acquaintanceship—why, it is all right of course. I have no reason to complain; but I must say that I can't help being surprised." He saw her lips quiver and her bosom heave. "Marcia, do you blame me for feeling hurt at your coldness when I came here to tell you—to tell you—I—I love you?" With his nerves all unstrung, and his hunger for sympathy, he really believed that he had come to tell her this. "Yes," he added, bitterly, "I *will* tell you, though it seems to be the last word I shall speak to you. I'll go, now."

"Bartley! You shall *never* go!" she cried, throwing herself in his way. "Do you think I don't care for you, too? You may kiss me—you may *kill* me, now!" The passionate tears sprang to her eyes, without the sound of sobs or the contortion of weeping, and she did not wait for his embrace. She flung her arms around his neck and held him fast, crying: "I wouldn't kiss you for your own sake, darling; and if I had died for it—I thought I should die last night—I was never going to let you put your arm round me again till you said—till—till—now! Don't you see?" She caught him tighter, and hid her face in his neck, and cried and laughed for joy and shame, while he suffered her caresses with a certain bewilderment.

"I want to tell you now—I want to explain," she said, lifting her face and letting him from her as far as her arms, caught around his neck, would reach, and fervidly searching his eyes, lest some ray of what he would think should escape her. "Don't speak a word first! Father saw us at the door last night—he happened to be coming down stairs because he couldn't sleep—just when you——. Oh, Bartley, don't!" she implored, at the little smile that made his moustache quiver. "And he asked me whether we were engaged; and, when I couldn't tell him we were, I know what he thought. I knew how he despised me, and I determined that, if you didn't tell me that you cared for me, you should never touch me again, except to shake hands, like any one else; and that's the reason, Bartley, and not—not because I didn't care more for you than I do for the whole world. And—and—you don't mind it, now, do you? It was for your sake, dearest."

Whether Bartley perfectly divined or not all the feeling at which her words hinted, it was delicious to be clung about by such a pretty girl as Marcia Gaylord, to have her now darting her face into his neck-scarf with intolerable consciousness, and now boldly confronting him with all-defying fondness while she lightly pushed him and pulled him here and there in the vehemence of her

appeal; and Bartley laughed as he caught her head between his hands, and covered her lips and eyes with his kisses. Perhaps such a man, in those fastnesses of his nature which psychology has not yet explored, never loses, even in the tenderest transports, the sense of prey as to the girl whose love he has won; but if this is certain, it is also certain that he has transports which are tender, and Bartley now felt his soul melted with affection that was very novel and sweet.

"Why, Marcia!" he said, "what a strange girl you are!" He sank into his chair again, and, putting his arms around her waist, gathered her upon his knee, like a child.

She held herself apart from him at her arm's length, and said—

"Wait! Let me say it before it seems as if we had always been engaged, and everything was as right then as it is now. Did you despise me for letting you kiss me before we were engaged?"

"No," he laughed again. "I liked you for it."

"But if you thought I would let any one else, you wouldn't have liked it?"

This diverted him still more.

"I shouldn't have liked that more than half as well."

"No," she said thoughtfully. She dropped her face a while on his shoulder, and seemed to be

struggling with herself. Then she lifted it, and "Did you ever—did you——" she gasped.

He put her head down with his hand, and turned his face aside to nestle against hers. Then he said, laughing out his amusement in her—

"If you want me to say that all the other girls in the world are not worth a hair of your head, I 'll say that, Marcia. Now, let 's talk business!"

This made her laugh, and—

"I shall want a little lock of yours," she said, as if they had hitherto been talking of nothing but each other's hair.

"And I shall want all of yours," he answered.

"No. Don't be silly." She critically explored his face. "How funny to have a mole in your eyebrow!" She put her finger on it. "I never saw it before."

"You never looked so closely. There 's a scar at the corner of your upper lip that I hadn't noticed."

"Can you see that?" she demanded, radiantly. "Well, you *have* got good eyes! The cat did it when I was a little girl."

The door opened, and Mrs. Gaylord surprised them in the celebration of these discoveries—or, rather, she surprised herself, for she stood holding the door and helpless to move, though in her heart she had an apologetic impulse to retire, and she even believed that she made some murmurs of

excuse for her intrusion. Bartley was equally abashed, but Marcia rose with the coolness of her sex in the intimate emergencies which confound a man.

"Oh, mother, it's you! I forgot about you. Come in! Or I'll set the table, if that's what you want." As Mrs. Gaylord continued to look from her to Bartley in her daze, Marcia added, simply: "We're engaged, mother. You may as well know it first as last, and I guess you better know it first."

Her mother appeared not to think it safe to relax her hold upon the door, and Bartley went filially to her rescue—if it was rescue to salute her blushing defencelessness as he did. A confused sense of the extraordinary nature and possible impropriety of the proceeding may have suggested her husband to her mind; or it may have been a feeling that some remark was expected of her, even in the mental destitution to which she was reduced.

"Have you told Mr. Gaylord about it?" she asked, of either, or neither, or both, as they chose to take it.

Bartley left the word to Marcia, who answered—

"Well, no, mother. We haven't yet. We've only just found it out ourselves. I guess father can wait till he comes in to dinner. I intend to keep Bartley here to prove it."

"He said," remarked Mrs. Gaylord, whom Bartley had led to her chair and placed on her cushion, "'t he had a headache when he first came in," and she appealed to him for corroboration, while she vainly endeavoured to gather force to grapple again with the larger fact that he and Marcia were just engaged to be married.

Marcia stooped down, and pulled her mother up out of her chair with a hug.

"Oh, come now, mother! You mustn't let it take your breath away," she said, with patronising fondness. "I'm not afraid of what father will say. You know what he thinks of Bartley—or Mr. Hubbard, as I presume you'll want me to call him! Now, mother, you just run up-stairs, and put on your best cap, and leave me to set the table and get up the dinner. I guess I can get Bartley to help me. Mother, mother, mother!" she cried, in happiness that was otherwise unutterable, and clasping her mother closer in her strong young arms, she kissed her with a fervour that made her blush again before the young man.

"Marcia, Marcia! You hadn't ought to! It's ridiculous!" she protested. But she suffered herself to be thrust out of the room, grateful for exile, in which she could collect her scattered wits and set herself to realise the fact that had dispersed them. It was decorous, also, for her to leave Marcia

alone with Mr. Hubbard, far more so now than when he was merely company; she felt that, and she fumbled over the dressing she was sent about, and once she looked out of her chamber window at the office where Mr. Gaylord sat, and wondered what Mr. Gaylord (she thought of him, and even dreamt of him as Mr. Gaylord, and had never, in the most familiar moments, addressed him otherwise) *would* say! But she left the solution of the problem to him and Marcia; she was used to leaving them to the settlement of their own difficulties.

"Now, Bartley," said Marcia, in the business-like way that women assume in such matters, as soon as the great fact is no longer in doubt, "you must help me to set the table. Put up that leaf and I'll put up this. I'm going to do more for mother than I used to," she said, repentant in her bliss. "It's a shame how much I've left to her." The domestic instinct was already astir in her heart.

Bartley pulled the table-cloth straight from her, and vied with her in the rapidity and exactness with which he arranged the knives and forks at right angles beside the plates. When it came to some heavier dishes, they agreed to carry them turn about; but when it was her turn, he put his arm about her to support her elbow—"as I did last night, and saved you from dropping a lamp."

This made her laugh, and she dropped the first dish with a crash.

"Poor mother!" she exclaimed. "I know she heard that, and she'll be in agony to know which one it is."

Mrs. Gaylord did indeed hear it, far off in her chamber, and quaked with an anxiety which became intolerable at last.

"Marcia! Marcia!" she quavered down the stairs, "what *have* you broken?"

Marcia opened the door long enough to call back, "Oh, only the blue-edged platter, mother!" and then she flew at Bartley, crying, "For shame! For shame!" and pressing her hand over his mouth to stifle his laughter. "She'll hear you, Bartley, and think you're laughing at her."

But she laughed herself at his struggles, and ended by taking him by the hand and pulling him out into the kitchen, where neither of them could be heard. She abandoned herself to the ecstasy of her soul, and he thought she had never been so charming as in this wild gaiety.

"Why, Marsh! I never saw you carry on so before!"

"You never saw me engaged before! That's the way all girls act—if they get the chance. Don't you like me to be so?" she asked, with quick anxiety.

"Rather!" he replied.

"Oh, Bartley!" she exclaimed, "I feel like a child. I surprise myself as much as I do you; for I thought I had got very old, and I didn't suppose I should ever let myself go in this way. But there is something about this that lets me be as silly as I like. It's somehow as if I were a great deal more alone when I'm with you than when I'm by myself! How does it make you feel?"

"Good!" he answered, and that satisfied her better than if he had entered into those subtleties which she had tried to express: it was more like a man. He had his arm about her waist again, and she put down her hand on his to press it closer against her heart.

"Of course," she explained, recurring to his surprise at her frolic mood, "I don't expect you to be silly because I am."

"No," he assented; "but how can I help it?"

"Oh, I don't mean for the time being; I mean generally speaking. I mean that I care for you because I know you know a great deal more than I do, and because I respect you. I know that everybody expects you to be something great, and I do, too."

Bartley did not deny the justness of her opinions concerning himself, or the reasonableness of the general expectation, though he probably could not see the relation of these cold abstractions to the

pleasure of sitting with his arm round a pretty girl's waist. But he said nothing.

"Do you know," she went on, turning her face prettily around toward him, but holding it a little way off, to secure attention as impersonal as might be under the circumstances, "what pleased me more than anything else you ever said to me?"

"No," answered Bartley. "Something you got out of me when you were trying to make me tell you the difference between you and the other Equity girls?"

She laughed, in glad defiance of her own consciousness.

"Well, I *was* trying to make you compliment me; I'm not going to deny it. But I must say I got my come-uppance: you didn't say a thing I cared for. But you did afterward. Don't you remember?"

"No. When?"

She hesitated a moment.

"When you told me that my influence had—had —made you better, you know——"

"Oh!" said Bartley. "That! Well," he added carelessly, "it's every word true. Didn't you believe it?"

"I was just as glad as if I did; and it made me resolve never to do or say a thing that could lower your opinion of me; and then, you know, you kissed me there at the door, and it all seemed part of our

trying to make each other better. But when father looked at me in that way, and asked me if we were engaged, I went down into the dust with shame. And worse than that, it seemed to me that you had just been laughing at me, and amusing yourself with me, and I was so furious I didn't know what to do. Do you know what I wanted to do? I wanted to run down-stairs to father, and tell him what you had said, and ask him if he believed you had ever done so to any other girl." She paused a little, but he did not answer, and she continued. "But now I'm glad I didn't. And I shall never ask you that, and I shall not care for anything that you—that 's happened before to-day. It 's all right. And you *do* think I shall always *try* to make you good and happy, don't you?"

"I don't think you can make me much happier than I am at present, and I don't believe anybody could make me feel better," answered Bartley.

She gave a little laugh at his refusal to be serious, and let her head, for fondness, fall upon his shoulder, while he turned round and round a ring he found on her finger.

"Ah, ha!" he said, after a while. "Who gave you this ring, Miss Gaylord?"

"Father, Christmas before last," she promptly answered, without moving. "I'm glad you asked," she murmured in a lower voice, full of pride in the

maiden love she could give him. "There's never been any one but you, or the thought of any one." She suddenly started away.

"Now, let's play we're getting dinner." It was quite time; in the next moment the coffee boiled up, and if she had not caught the lid off and stirred it down with her spoon, it would have been spoiled. The steam ascended to the ceiling, and filled the kitchen with the fragrant smell of the berry.

"I'm glad we're going to have coffee," she said. "You'll have to put up with a cold dinner, except potatoes. But the coffee will make up, and I shall need a cup to keep me awake. I don't believe I slept last night till nearly morning. Do you like coffee?"

"I'd have given all I ever expect to be worth for a cup of it last night," he said. "I was awfully hungry when I got back to the hotel, and I couldn't find anything but a piece of mince-pie and some old cheese, and I had to be satisfied with cold milk. I felt as if I had lost all my friends this morning when I woke up."

A sense of remembered grievance trembled in his voice, and made her drop her head on his arm in pity and derision of him.

"Poor Bartley!" she cried. "And you came up here for a little petting from me, didn't you? I've noticed that in you! Well, you didn't get it, did you?"

"Well, not at first," he said.

"Yes, you can't complain of any want of petting

at last," she returned, delighted at his indirect recognition of the difference. Then the daring, the archness, and caprice that make coquetry in some women, and lurk a divine possibility in all, came out in her; the sweetness, kept back by the whole strength of her pride, overflowed that broken barrier now, and she seemed to lavish this revelation of herself upon him with a sort of tender joy in his bewilderment. She was not hurt when he crudely expressed the elusive sense which has been in other men's minds at such times: they cannot believe that this fascination is inspired, and not practised.

"Well," he said, "I'm glad you told me that I was the first. I should have thought you'd had a good deal of experience in flirtation."

"You wouldn't have thought so if you hadn't been a great flirt yourself," she answered audaciously. "Perhaps I have been engaged before!"

Their talk was for the most part frivolous, and their thoughts ephemeral; but again they were, with her at least, suddenly and deeply serious. Till then all things seemed to have been held in arrest, and impressions, ideas, feelings, fears, desires, released themselves simultaneously, and sought expression with a rush that defied coherence.

"Oh, why do we try to talk?" she asked at last. "The more we say, the more we leave unsaid. Let us keep still a while!"

But she could not.

"Bartley! When did you first think you cared about me?"

"I don't know," said Bartley. "I guess it must have been the first time I saw you."

"Yes. That is when I first knew that I cared for you. But it seems to me that I must have always cared for you, and that I only found it out when I saw you going by the house that day." She mused a little time before she asked again.

"Bartley!"

"Well?"

"Did you ever use to be afraid— Or, no! Wait! I'll *tell* you first, and then I'll *ask* you. I'm not ashamed of it now, though once I thought I couldn't bear to have any one find it out. I used to be awfully afraid you didn't care for me! I would try to make out from things you did and said whether you did or not; but I never could be certain. I believe I used to find the most comfort in discouraging myself. I used to say to myself, 'Why, of course he doesn't! How can he? He's been around everywhere, and he 's seen so many girls. He corresponds with lots of them. Altogether likely he 's engaged to some of the young ladies he 's met in Boston; and he just goes with me here for a blind.' And then when you would praise me, sometimes, I would just say, 'Oh, he's complimented plenty of girls. I know

he's thinking this instant of the young lady he's engaged to in Boston.' And it would almost kill me; and when you did some little thing to show that you liked me, I would think, 'He doesn't like me! He hates, he despises me. He does, he does, he does!' And I would go on that way, with my teeth shut, and my breath held, I don't know *how* long."

Bartley broke out into a broad laugh at this image of desperation, but she added tenderly—

"I hope I never made you suffer in that way?"

"What way?" he asked.

"That's what I wanted you to tell me. Did you ever—did you use to be afraid sometimes that I —that you—did you put off telling me that you cared for me so long because you thought, you dreaded— Oh, I don't see what I can ever do to make it up to you if you did! Were you afraid I didn't care for you?"

"No!" shouted Bartley. She had risen and stood before him in the fervour of her entreaty, and he seized her arms, pinioning them to her side, and holding her helpless, while he laughed, and laughed again. "I knew you were dead in love with me from the first moment."

"Bartley! Bartley Hubbard!" she exclaimed; "let me go—let me go, this instant! I never heard of such a shameless thing!"

But she really made no effort to escape.

V.

THE house seemed too little for Marcia's happiness, and after dinner she did not let Bartley forget his last night's engagement. She sent him off to get his horse at the hotel, and ran up to her room to put on her wraps for the drive. Her mother cleared away the dinner things; she pushed the table to the side of the room, and then sat down in her feather-cushioned chair and waited her husband's pleasure to speak. He ordinarily rose from the Sunday dinner and went back to his office; to-day he had taken a chair before the stove. But he had mechanically put his hat on, and he wore it pushed off his forehead as he tilted his chair back on its hind legs, and braced himself against the hearth of the stove with his feet.

A man is master in his own house generally through the exercise of a certain degree of brutality, but Squire Gaylord maintained his predominance by an enlightened absenteeism. No man living always at home was ever so little under his own roof. While he was in more active business life, he had

kept an office in the heart of the village, where he spent all his days, and a great part of every night; but after he had become rich enough to risk whatever loss of business the change might involve, he bought this large old square house on the border of the village, and thenceforth made his home in the little detached office.

If Mrs. Gaylord had dimly imagined that she should see something more of him, having him so near at hand, she really saw less: there was no weather, by day or night, in which he could not go to his office now. He went no more than his wife into the village society; she might have been glad now and then of a little glimpse of the world, but she never said so, and her social life had ceased like her religious life. Their house was richly furnished according to the local taste of the time; the parlour had a brussels carpet, and heavy chairs of mahogany and hair-cloth; Marcia had a piano there, and since she had come home from school they had made company, as Mrs. Gaylord called it, two or three times for her; but they had held aloof from the festivity, the Squire in his office, and Mrs. Gaylord in the family-room, where they now sat in unwonted companionship.

"Well, Mr. Gaylord," said his wife, "I don't know as you can say but what *Marcia's* suited well enough."

This was the first allusion they had made to the subject, but she let it take the argumentative form of her cogitations.

"M-yes," sighed the Squire, in long, nasal assent, "most too well, if anything." He rasped first one unshaven cheek, and then the other, with his thin, quivering hand.

"He's smart enough," said Mrs. Gaylord, as before.

"M-yes, most too smart," replied her husband, a little more quickly than before. "He's smart enough, even if she wasn't, to see from the start that she was crazy to have him, and that isn't the best way to begin life for a married couple, if I'm a judge."

"It would killed her if she hadn't got him. I could see 'twas wearin' on her every day more and more. She used to fairly jump every knock she'd hear at the door; and I know sometimes, when she was afraid he wasn't coming, she used to go out in hopes 't she sh'd meet him: I don't suppose she allowed to herself that she did it for that; Marcia's proud."

"M-yes," said the Squire, "she's proud. And when a proud girl makes a fool of herself about a fellow, it's a matter of life and death with her. She can't help herself. She lets go everything."

"I declare," Mrs. Gaylord went on, "it worked me up considerable to have her come in some those

times, and see by her face 't she'd seen him with some the other girls. She used to *look* so! And then I'd hear her up in her room cryin' and cryin'. I shouldn't cared so much if Marcia'd been like any other girl, kind of flirty, like, about it. But she wa'n't. She was just bowed down before her idol."

A final assent came from the Squire as if wrung out of his heart, and he rose from his chair, and then sat down again. Marcia was his child, and he loved her with his whole soul.

"M-well!" he deeply sighed, "all that part's over, anyway," but he tingled in an anguish of sympathy with what she had suffered. "You see, Miranda, how she looked at me when she first came in with him—so proud and independent, poor girl! and yet as if she was afraid I *mightn't* like it?"

"Yes, I see it."

He pulled his hat far down over his cavernous eyes, and worked his thin, rusty old jaws.

"I hope 't she'll be able to school herself, so 's t' not show out her feelings so much," said Mrs. Gaylord.

"I wish she could school herself so as to not have 'em so much; but I guess she'll have 'em, and I guess she 'll show 'em out." They were both silent; after a while he added, throwing at the stove a minute fragment of the cane he had pulled off the seat of his chair: "Miranda, I 've expected some-

thing of this sort a good while, and I 've thought over what Bartley had better do."

Mrs. Gaylord stooped forward and picked up the bit of wood which her husband had thrown down; her vigilance was rewarded by finding a thread on the oil-cloth near where it lay; she whipped this round her finger, and her husband continued—

"He 'd better give up his paper and go into the law. He 's done well in the paper, and he 's a smart writer; but editing a newspaper ain't any work for a *man*. It 's all well enough as long as he 's single, but when he 's got a wife to look after, he 'd better get down to *work*. My business is in just such a shape now that I could hand it over to him in a lump; but come to wait a year or two longer, and this young man and that one 'll eat into it, and it won't be the same thing at all. I shall want Bartley to push right along, and get admitted at once. He can do it fast enough. He 's bright enough," added the old man, with a certain grimness. "M-well!" he broke out, with a quick sigh, after a moment of musing. "It hasn't happened at any very bad time. I was just thinking, this morning, that I should like to have my whole time, pretty soon, to look after my property. I sha'n't want Bartley to do *that* for me. I 'll give him a good start in money and in business; but I 'll look after my property myself, I 'll speak to him the first chance I get."

A light step sounded on the stairs, and Marcia burst into the room, ready for her drive.

"I wanted to get a good warm before I started," she explained, stooping before the stove, and supporting herself with one hand on her father's knee. There had been no formal congratulations upon her engagement from either of her parents; but this was not requisite, and would have been a little affected: they were perhaps now ashamed to mention it outright before her alone. The Squire, however, went so far as to put his hand over the hand she had laid upon his knee, and to smooth it twice or thrice.

"You going to ride after that sorrel colt of Bartley's?" he asked.

"Of course!" she answered, with playful pertness. "I guess Bartley can manage the sorrel colt! He 's never had any trouble yet."

"He 's always been able to give his whole mind to him before," said the Squire. He gave Marcia's hand a significant squeeze, and let it go.

She would not confess her consciousness of his meaning at once. She looked up at the clock, and then turned and pulled her father's watch out of his waistcoat pocket, and compared the time. "Why, you 're both fast!"

"Perhaps Bartley's slow," said the Squire, and having gone as far as he intended in this direction, he permitted himself a low chuckle.

The sleigh-bells jingled without, and she sprang lightly to her feet. "I guess you don't think Bartley's slow," she exclaimed, and hung over her father long enough to rub her lips against his bristly cheek. "Bye, mother," she said, over her shoulder, and went out of the room. She let her muff hang as far down in front of her as her arms would reach, in a stylish way, and moved with a little rhythmical tilt, as if to some inner music. Even in her furs she was elegantly slender in shape.

The old people remained silent and motionless till the clash of the bells died away. Then the Squire rose, and went to the wood-shed beyond the kitchen, whence he re-appeared with an armful of wood. His wife started at the sight. "Mr. Gaylord, what *be* you doin'?"

"Oh, I 'm going to make 'em up a little fire in the parlour stove. I guess they won't want us round a great deal, when they come back."

Mrs. Gaylord said, "Well, I never did!" When her husband returned from the parlour, she added, "I suppose some folks 'd say it was rather of a strange way of spendin' the Sabbath."

"It 's a very good way of spendin' the Sabbath. You don't suppose that any of the people in church are half as happy, do you? Why, old Jonathan Edwards himself used to allow 'all proper oppor-

tunity' for the young fellows that came to see his girls, 'and a room and fire, if needed.' His 'Life' says so."

"I guess he didn't allow it on the Sabbath," retorted Mrs. Gaylord.

"Well, the 'Life' don't say," chuckled the Squire. "Why, Miranda, I do it for Marcia! There 's never but one first day to an engagement. You know that as well as I do." In saying this, Squire Gaylord gave way to his repressed emotion in an extravagance. He suddenly stooped over and kissed his wife; but he spared her confusion by going out to his office at once, where he stayed the whole afternoon.

Bartley and Marcia took the "Long Drive," as it was called, at Equity. The road plunged into the darkly wooded gulch beyond the house, and then struck away eastward, crossing loop after loop of the river on the covered bridges, where the neighbours, who had broken it out with their ox-teams in the open, had thickly bedded it in snow. In the valleys and sheltered spots it remained free, and so wide that encountering teams could easily pass each other, but where it climbed a hill, or crossed a treeless level, it was narrowed to a single track, with turn-outs at established points, where the drivers of the sleighs waited to be sure that the stretch beyond was clear before going forward. In the country,

the winter which held the village in such close siege was an occupation under which nature seemed to cower helpless, and men made a desperate and ineffectual struggle. The houses, banked up with snow almost to the sills of the windows that looked out, blind with frost, upon the lifeless world, were dwarfed in the drifts, and seemed to founder in a white sea blotched with strange bluish shadows under the slanting sun. Where they fronted close upon the road, it was evident that the fight with the snow was kept up unrelentingly; spaces were shovelled out, and paths were kept open to the middle of the highway, and to the barn; but where they were somewhat removed, there was no visible trace of the conflict, and no sign of life except the faint, wreathed lines of smoke wavering upward from the chimneys.

In the hollows through which the road passed, the lower boughs of the pines and hemlocks were weighed down with the snowfall till they lay half-submerged in the drifts, but wherever the wind could strike them, they swung free of this load and met in low, flat arches above the track. The river betrayed itself only when the swift current of a ripple broke through the white surface in long, irregular, greyish blurs. It was all wild and lonesome, but to the girl alone in it with her lover, the solitude was sweet, and she did not wish to

speak even to him. His hands were both busy with the reins, but it was agreed between them that she might lock hers through his arm. Cowering close to him under the robes, she laid her head on his shoulder and looked out over the flying landscape in measureless content, and smiled, with filling eyes, when he bent over, and warmed his cold red cheek on the top of her fur cap.

The moments of bliss that silence a woman rouse a man to make sure of his rapture.

"How do you like it, Marsh?" he asked, trying at one of these times to peer round into her face. "Are you afraid?"

"No—only of getting back too soon."

He made the shivering echoes answer with his delight in this, and chirruped to the colt, who pushed forward at a wilder speed, flinging his hoofs out before him with the straight thrust of the born trotter, and seeming to overtake them as they flew. "I should like this ride to last for ever!"

"For ever!" she repeated. "That would do for a beginning."

"Marsh! What a girl you are! I never supposed you would be so free to let a fellow know how much you cared for him."

"Neither did I," she answered, dreamily. "But now—now the only trouble is that I don't know *how* to let him know." She gave his arm to which she

clung a little convulsive clutch, and pressed her head harder upon his shoulder.

"Well, that's pretty much my complaint, too," said Bartley, "though I couldn't have expressed it so well."

"Oh, *you* express!" she murmured, with the pride in him which implied that there were no thoughts worth expressing to which he could not give a monumental utterance. Her adoration flattered his self-love to the same passionate intensity, and to something like the generous complexion of her worship. "Marcia," he answered, "I am going to try to be all you expect of me. And I hope I shall never do anything unworthy of your ideal."

She could only press his arm again in speechless joy, but she said to herself that she should always remember these words.

The wind had been rising ever since they started, but they had not noticed it till now, when the woods began to thin away on either side, and he stopped before striking out over one of the naked stretches of the plain—a white waste swept by the blasts that sucked down through a gorge of the mountain, and flattened the snow-drifts as the tornado flattens the waves. Across this expanse ran the road, its stiff lines obliterated here and there, in the slight depressions, and showing dark along the rest of the track. It was a good half-mile to the next body of woods,

and midway, there was one of those sidings where a sleigh approaching from the other quarter must turn out and yield the right of way. Bartley stopped his colt, and scanned the road.

"Anybody coming?" asked Marcia.

"No, I don't see any one. But if there's any one in the woods yonder, they'd better wait till I get across. No horse in Equity can beat this colt to the turn-out."

"Oh, well, look carefully, Bartley. If we meet any one beyond the turn-out, I don't know what I should do," pleaded the girl.

"I don't know what *they* would do," said Bartley. "But it's their look-out, now, if they come. Wrap your face up well, or put your head under the robe. I've got to hold my breath the next half-mile." He loosed the reins, and sped the colt out of the shelter where he had halted. The wind struck them like an edge of steel, and catching the powdery snow that their horse's hoofs beat up, sent it spinning and swirling far along the glistening levels on their lee. They felt the thrill of the go as if they were in some light boat leaping over a swift current. Marcia disdained to cover her face, if he must confront the wind, but after a few gasps she was glad to bend forward, and bury it in the long hair of the bear-skin robe. When she lifted it, they were already past the siding, and she saw a cutter dashing toward

them from the cover of the woods. "Bartley!" she screamed, "the sleigh!"

"Yes," he shouted. "Some fool! There 's going to be trouble, here," he added, checking his horse as he could. "They don't seem to know how to manage: it 's a couple of women! Hold on, hold on!" he called. "Don't try to turn out: I 'll turn out!"

The women pulled their horse's head this way and that, in apparent confusion, and then began to turn out into the trackless snow at the roadside, in spite of Bartley's frantic efforts to arrest them. They sank deeper and deeper into the drift: their horse plunged and struggled, and then their cutter went over, amidst their shrieks and cries for help.

Bartley drove up abreast of the wreck, and saying, "Still, Jerry! Don't be afraid, Marcia," he put the reins into her hands, and sprang out to the rescue.

One of the women had been flung out free of the sleigh, and had already gathered herself up, and stood crying and wringing her hands: "Oh, Mr. Hubbard, Mr. Hubbard! Help Hannah! She 's under there!"

"All right! Keep quiet, Mrs. Morrison! Take hold of your horse's head!" Bartley had first of all seized him by the bit, and pulled him to his feet; he was old and experienced in obedience, and he now stood waiting orders, patiently enough. Bartley

seized the cutter, and by an effort of all his strength righted it. The colt started and trembled, but Marcia called to him in Bartley's tone, "Still, Jerry!" and he obeyed her.

The girl who had been caught under the overturned cutter escaped like a wild thing out of a trap, when it was lifted, and plunging some paces away, faced round upon her rescuer with the hood pulled straight and set comely to her face again, almost before he could ask: "Any bones broken, Hannah?"

"*No!*" she shouted. "Mother! Mother! Stop crying! Don't you see I 'm not dead?" She leaped about, catching up this wrap and that, shaking the dry snow out of them, and flinging them back into the cutter, while she laughed in the wild tumult of her spirits. Bartley helped her to pick up the fragments of the wreck, and joined her in making fun of the adventure. The wind hustled them, but they were warm in defiance of it with their jollity and their bustle.

"Why didn't you let me turn out?" demanded Bartley, as he and the girl stood on opposite sides of the cutter, re-arranging the robes in it.

"Oh, I thought I could turn out, well enough. You had a right to the road."

"Well, the next time you see any one past the turn-out, you better not start from the woods."

"Why, there's no more room in the woods to get past than there is here," cried the girl.

"There's more shelter."

"Oh, I'm not cold!" She flashed a look at him from her brilliant face, warm with all the glow of her young health, and laughed, and before she dropped her eyes, she included Marcia in her glance. They had already looked at each other without any sign of recognition. "Come, mother! All right now!"

Her mother left the horse's head, and, heavily ploughing back to the cutter, tumbled herself in. The girl, from her side, began to climb in, but her weight made the sleigh careen, and she dropped down with a gay shriek.

Bartley came round and lifted her in; the girl called to her horse, and drove up into the road and away.

Bartley looked after her a moment, and continued to glance in that direction when he stood stamping the snow off his feet, and brushing it from his legs and arms, before he remounted to Marcia's side. He was excited, and talked rapidly and loudly, as he took the reins from Marcia's passive hold, and let the colt out. "That girl is the pluckiest fool, yet! Wouldn't let me turn out because I had the right of way! And she wasn't going to let anybody else have a hand in getting that old ark of theirs afloat again. Good their horse wasn't anything like Jerry!

How well Jerry behaved! Were you frightened, Marsh?" He bent over to see her face, but she had not her head on his shoulder, and she did not sit close to him, now. "Did you freeze?"

"Oh, no! I got along very well," she answered, drily, and edged away as far as the width of the seat would permit. "It would have been better for you to lead their horse up into the road, and then she could have got in without your help. Her mother got in alone."

He took the reins into his left hand, and passing his strong right around her, pulled her up to his side. She resisted, with diminishing force; at last she ceased to resist, and her head fell passively to its former place on his shoulder. He did not try to speak any word of comfort; he only held her close to him; when she looked up as they entered the village, she confronted him with a brilliant smile that ignored her tears.

But that night, when she followed him to the door, she looked him searchingly in the eyes. "I wonder if you really do despise me, Bartley?" she asked.

"Certainly," he answered, with a jesting smile. "What for?"

"For showing out my feelings so. For not even trying to pretend not to care everything for you."

"It wouldn't be any use, your trying: I should know that you did, any way."

"Oh, don't laugh, Bartley, don't laugh! I don't believe that I ought to. I've heard that it makes people sick of you. But I can't help it—I can't help it. And if—if you think I'm always going to be so,—and that I'm going keep on getting worse and worse, and making you so unhappy, why, you'd better break your engagement now—while you have a chance."

"What have you been making me unhappy about, I should like to know? I thought I'd been having a very good time."

She hid her face against his breast. "It almost *killed* me to see you there with her! I was so cold,—my hands were half-frozen, holding the reins,—and I was so afraid of the colt I didn't know what to do; and I had been keeping up my courage on your account; and you seemed so long about it all; and she could have got in perfectly well—as well as her mother did—without your help—" Her voice broke in a miserable sob, and she clutched herself tighter to him.

He smoothed down her hair with his hand. "Why, Marsh! Did you think that made me unhappy? *I* didn't mind it a bit. I knew what the trouble was, at the time; but I wasn't going to say anything. I knew you would be all right as soon as you could think it over. You don't suppose I care anything for that girl?"

"No," answered a rueful sob. "But I *wish* you didn't have anything to do with her. I know she 'll make trouble for you, somehow."

"Well," said Bartley, "I can't very well turn her off as long as she does her work. But you needn't be worried about making me unhappy. If anything, I rather liked it. It showed how much you *did* care for me." He bent down toward her, with a look of bright raillery, for the parting kiss. "Now then: once, twice, three times—and good-night it is!"

VI.

THE spectacle of a love affair in which the woman gives more of her heart than the man gives of his, is so pitiable that we are apt to attribute a kind of merit to her, as if it were a voluntary self-sacrifice for her to love more than her share. Not only other men, but other women look on with this canonising compassion; for women have a lively power of imagining themselves in the place of any sister who suffers in matters of sentiment, and are eager to espouse the common cause in commiserating her. Each of them pictures herself similarly wronged or slighted by the man she likes best, and feels how cruel it would be if he were to care less for her than she for him; and for the time being, in order to realise the situation, she loads him with all the sins of omission proper to the culprit in the alien case. But possibly there is a compensation in merely loving, even where the love given is out of all proportion to the love received.

If Bartley Hubbard's sensations and impressions of the day had been at all reasoned that night as he

lay thinking it over, he could unquestionably have seen many advantages for Marcia in the affair—perhaps more than for himself. But to do him justice he did not formulate these now, or in anywise explicitly recognise the favours he was bestowing. At twenty-six one does not naturally compute them in musing upon the girl to whom one is just betrothed; and Bartley's mind was a confusion of pleasure. He liked so well to think how fond of him Marcia was, that it did not occur to him then to question whether he were as fond of her. It is possible that as he drowsed, at last, there floated airily through the consciousness which was melting and dispersing itself before the approach of sleep, an intimation from somewhere to some one that perhaps the affair need not be considered too seriously. But in that mysterious limbo, one cannot be sure of what is thought and what is dreamed; and Bartley always acquitted himself, and probably with justice, of any want of seriousness.

What he did make sure of when he woke was that he was still out of sorts, and that he had again that dull headache; and his instant longing for sympathy did more than anything else to convince him that he really loved Marcia, and had never, in his obscurest or remotest feeling, swerved in his fealty to her. In the atmosphere of her devotion yesterday, he had so wholly forgotten his sufferings that he had

imagined himself well; but now he found that he was not well, and he began to believe that he was going to have what the country people call a fit of sickness. He felt that he ought to be taken care of, that he was unfit to work; and in his vexation at not being able to go to Marcia for comfort—it really amounted to nothing less—he entered upon the day's affairs with fretful impatience.

The *Free Press* was published on Tuesdays, and Monday was always a busy time of preparation. The hands were apt also to feel the demoralisation that follows a holiday even when it has been a holy day. The girls who set up the type of the *Free Press* had by no means foregone the rights and privileges of their sex in espousing their art, and they had their beaux on Sunday night like other young ladies. It resulted that on Monday morning they were nervous and impatient, alternating between fits of giggling delight in the interchange of fond reminiscences and the crossness which is pretty sure to disfigure human behaviour from want of sleep. But ordinarily Bartley got on very well with them. In spite of the assumption of equality between all classes in Equity, they stood in secret awe of his personal splendour and the tradition of his achievements at college and in the great world, and a flattering joke or a sharp sarcasm from him went a great way with them. Besides, he had an efficient

lieutenant in Henry Bird, the young printer who had picked up his trade in the office, and who acted as Bartley's foreman, so far as the establishment had an organisation. Bird had industry and discipline, which were contagious, and that love of his work which is said to be growing rare among artisans in the modern subdivision of trades. This boy—for he was only nineteen—worked at his craft early and late out of pleasure in it. He seemed one of those simple, subordinate natures which are happy in looking up to whatever assumes to be above them. He exulted to serve in a world where most people prefer to be served, and it is uncertain whether he liked his work better for its own sake, or Bartley's, for whom he did it. He was slight, and rather delicate in health, and it came natural for Bartley to patronise him. He took him on the long walks of which he was fond, and made him in some sort his humble confidant, talking to him of himself and his plans with large and braggart vagueness. He depended upon Bird in a great many things, and Bird never failed him; for he had a basis of constancy that was immoveable. "No," said a philosopher from a neighbouring logging-camp, who used to hang about the printing-office a long time after he had got his paper, "there ain't any great push about Henry; but he stays put." In the confidences which Bartley used to make Bird, he pro-

mised that when he left the newspaper for the law, he would see that no one else succeeded him. The young fellow did not need this promise to make him Bartley's fast friend, but it coloured his affection with ambitious enthusiasm; to edit and publish a newspaper—his dreams did not go beyond that: to devote it to Bartley's interest in the political life on which Bartley often hinted he might enter—that would be the sweetest privilege of realised success. Bird already wrote paragraphs for the *Free Press*, and Bartley let him make up a column of news from the city exchanges, which was partly written and partly selected.

Bartley came to the office rather late on Monday morning, bringing with him the papers from Saturday night's mail, which had lain unopened over Sunday, and went directly into his own room, without looking into the printing-office. He felt feverish and irritable, and he resolved to fill up with selections and let his editorial paragraphing go, or get Bird to do it. He was tired of the work, and sick of Equity; Marcia's face seemed to look sadly in upon his angry discontent, and he no longer wished to go to her for sympathy. His door opened, and without glancing from the newspaper which he held up before him, he asked—

"What is it, Bird? Do you want copy?"

"Well, no, Mr. Hubbard," answered Bird, "we

have copy enough for the force we've got this morning."

"Why, what's up?" demanded Bartley, dropping his paper.

"Lizzie Sawyer has sent word that she is sick, and we haven't heard or seen anything of Hannah Morrison."

"Confound the girls!" said Bartley, "there's always something the matter with them." He rubbed his hand over his forehead, as if to rub out the dull pain there. "Well," he said, "I must go to work myself, then." He rose, and took hold of the lapels of his coat, to pull it off; but something in Bird's look arrested him. "What is it?" he asked.

"Old Morrison was here, just before you came in, and said he wanted to see you. I think he was drunk," said Bird anxiously. "He said he was coming back again."

"All right; let him come," replied Bartley. "This is a free country—especially in Equity. I suppose he wants Hannah's wages raised, as usual. How much are we behind on the paper, Henry?"

"We're not a great deal behind, Mr. Hubbard, if we were not so weak-handed."

"Perhaps we can get Hannah back during the forenoon. At any rate, we can ask her honoured parent when he comes."

Where Morrison got his liquor was a question that agitated Equity from time to time, and baffled the officer of the law empowered to see that no strong drink came into the town. Under conditions which made it impossible even in the logging-camps, and rendered the sale of spirits too precarious for the apothecary, who might be supposed to deal in them medicinally, Morrison never failed of his spree when the mysterious mechanism of his appetite enforced it. Probably it was some form of bedevilled cider that supplied the material of his debauch; but even cider was not easily to be had.

Morrison's spree was a moveable feast, and recurred at irregular intervals of two, or three, or even six weeks, but it recurred often enough to keep him poor, and his family in a social outlawry, against which the kindly instincts of their neighbours struggled in vain. Mrs. Morrison was that pariah who, in a village like Equity, cuts herself off from hope by taking in washing; and it was a decided rise in the world for Hannah, a wild girl at school, to get a place in the printing-office. Her father had applied for it humbly enough at the tremulous and penitent close of one of his long sprees, and was grateful to Bartley for taking the special interest in her which she reported at home.

But the independence of a drunken shoemaker is proverbial, and Morrison's meek spirit soared into

lordly arrogance with his earliest cups. The first warning which the community had of his change of attitude was the conspicuous and even defiant closure of his shop, and the scornful rejection of custom, however urgent or necessitous. All Equity might go in broken shoes, for any patching or half-soling the people got from him. He went about collecting his small dues, and paying up his debts, as long as the money lasted, in token of his resolution not to take any favours from any man thereafter. Then he retired to his house on one of the by-streets, and by degrees drank himself past active offence. It was of course in his defiant humour that he came to visit Bartley, who had learned to expect him whenever Hannah failed to appear promptly at her work. The affair was always easily arranged. Bartley instantly assented, with whatever irony he liked, to Morrison's demands; he refused with overwhelming politeness even to permit him to give himself the trouble to support them by argument; he complimented Hannah inordinately as one of the most gifted and accomplished ladies of his acquaintance, and inquired affectionately after the health of each member of the Morrison family. When Morrison rose to go he always said, in shaking hands: "Well, sir, if there was more like you in Equity a poor man could get along. You're a gentleman, sir." After getting some paces away from the street-door, he stumbled

back up the stairs to repeat, "You 're a gentleman!" Hannah came during the day, and the wages remained the same: neither of the contracting parties regarded the increase so elaborately agreed upon, and Morrison, on becoming sober, gratefully ignored the whole transaction, though, by a curious juggle of his brain, he recurred to it in his next spree, and advanced in his new demand from the last rise: his daughter was now nominally in receipt of an income of forty dollars a week, but actually accepted four.

Bartley, on his part, enjoyed the business as an agreeable excitement and a welcome relief from the monotony of his official life. He never hurried Morrison's visits, but amused himself by treating him with the most flattering distinction, and baffling his arrogance by immediate concession. But this morning, when Morrison came back, with a front of uncommon fierceness, he merely looked up from his newspapers, to which he had recurred, and said coolly, "O, Mr. Morrison! Good-morning. I suppose it 's that little advance that you wish to see me about. Take a chair. What is the increase you ask this time? Of course I agree to anything."

He leaned forward, pencil in hand, to make a note of the figure Morrison should name, when the drunkard approached and struck the table in front of him with his fist, and blazed upon Bartley's face, suddenly uplifted, with his blue crazy eyes.

"No, sir! I won't take a seat, and I don't come on no such business! No, sir!" He struck the table again, and the violence of his blow upset the inkstand. Bartley saved himself by suddenly springing away.

"Hollo, here!" he shouted. "What do you mean by this infernal nonsense?"

"What do *you* mean," retorted the drunkard, "by makin' up to my girl?"

"You're a fool," cried Bartley, "and drunk!"

"I'll show you whether I'm a fool, and I'll show you whether I'm drunk," said Morrison. He opened the door and beckoned to Bird with an air of mysterious authority. "Young man! come here!"

Bird was used to the indulgence with which Bartley treated Morrison's tipsy freaks, and supposed that he had been called by his consent to witness another agreement to a rise in Hannah's wages. He came quickly, to help get Morrison out of the way the sooner, and he was astonished to be met by Bartley with—"I don't want you, Bird."

"All right," answered the boy; and he turned to go out of the door. But Morrison had planted himself against it, and he waved Bird austerely back.

"*I* want you," he said, with drunken impressive-

ness, "for a witness—wick—witness—while I ask Mr. Hubbard what he means by—"

"Hold your tongue!" cried Bartley. "Get out of this!" He advanced a pace or two towards Morrison, who stood his ground without swerving.

"Now you—you keep quiet, Mr. Hubbard," said Morrison, with a swift drunken change of mood, by which he passed from arrogant denunciation to a smooth, patronising mastery of the situation. "*I* wish this thing all settled amic—ic—amelcabilly."

Bartley broke into a helpless laugh at Morrison's final failure on a word difficult to sober tongues, and the latter went on: "No 'casion for bad feeling on either side. All I want know is what you mean?"

"Well, go on!" cried Bartley, good-naturedly, and he sat down in his chair, which he tilted back, and, clasping his hands behind his head, looked up into Morrison's face. "What do I mean by what?"

Probably Morrison had not expected to be categorical, or to bring anything like a bill of particulars against Bartley, and this demand gave him pause. "What you mean," he said at last, "by always praising her up so?"

"What I said. She's a very good girl, and a very bright one. You don't deny that?"

"No—no matter what I deny. What—what you lend her all them books for?"

"To improve her mind. You don't object to that? I thought you once thanked me for taking an interest in her."

"Don't you mind what I object to, and what I thank you for," said Morrison, with dignity. "I know what I'm about."

"I begin to doubt. But get on. I'm in a great hurry this morning," said Bartley.

Morrison seemed to be making a mental examination of his stock of charges, while the strain of keeping his upright position began to tell upon him, and he swayed to and fro against the door.

"What's that word you sent her by my boy, Sat'day night?"

"That she was a smart girl, and would be sure to get on if she was good—or words to that effect. I trust there was no offence in that, Mr. Morrison?"

Morrison surrendered himself to another season of cogitation, in which he probably found his vagueness growing upon him. He ended by fumbling in all his pockets, and bringing up from the last a crumpled scrap of paper.

"What you—what you say to that?"

Bartley took the extended scrap with an easy air. "Miss Morrison's handwriting, I think." He held it

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up before him and read aloud, "'I love my love with an H, because he is Handsome.' This appears to be a confidence of Miss Morrison to her Muse. Whom do you think she refers to, Mr. Morrison?"

"What—what's the first letter your name?" demanded Morrison, with an effort to collect his dispersing severity.

"B," promptly replied Bartley. "Perhaps this concerns you, Henry. Your name begins with an H." He passed the paper up over his head to Bird, who took it silently. "You see," he continued, addressing Bird, but looking at Morrison, as he spoke, "Mr. Morrison wishes to convict me of an attempt upon Miss Hannah's affections. Have you anything else to urge, Mr. Morrison?"

Morrison slid at last from his difficult position into a convenient chair, and struggled to keep himself from doubling forward. "I want know what you mean," he said, with dogged iteration.

"I'll show you what I mean," said Bartley with an ugly quiet, while his moustache began to twitch. He sprang to his feet and seized Morrison by the collar, pulling him up out of the chair till he held him clear off the floor, and opened the door with his other hand. "Don't show your face here again—you or your girl either!" Still holding the man by the collar, he pushed him before him through the office, and gave him a final thrust out of the outer door.

Bartley returned to his room in a white heat: "Miserable tipsy rascal!" he panted. "I wonder who has set him on to this thing."

Bird stood pale and silent, still holding the crumpled scrap of paper in his hand.

"I shouldn't be surprised if that impudent little witch herself had put him up to it. She's capable of it," said Bartley, fumbling aimlessly about on his table in his wrath without looking at Bird.

"It's a lie!" said Bird.

Bartley started as if the other had struck him, and as he glared at Bird the anger went out of his face for pure amazement. "Are you out of your mind, Henry?" he asked calmly. "Perhaps you're drunk too, this morning? The devil seems to have got into pretty much everybody."

"It's a lie! repeated the boy, while the tears sprang to his eyes. "She's as good a girl as Marcia Gaylord is, any day!"

"Better go away, Henry," said Bartley with a deadly sort of gentleness.

"I'm going away," answered the boy. "I've done my last day's work for *you*." He pulled down his shirt-sleeves and buttoned them at the wrists, while the tears ran out over his face: helpless tears, the sign of his womanish tenderness, his womanish weakness.

Bartley continued to glare at him. "Why, I do

believe you're in love with her yourself, you little fool!"

"Oh, I've *been* a fool!" cried Bird. "A fool to think as much of you as I always have—a fool to believe that you were a gentleman, and wouldn't take a mean advantage. I was a fool to suppose you wanted to do her any good, when you came praising and flattering her, and turning her head!"

"Well, then," said Bartley with harsh insolence, "don't be a fool any longer. If you're in love with her, you haven't any quarrel with me, my boy. She flies at higher game than humble newspaper editors. The head of Willett's lumbering gang is your man; and so you may go and tell that old sot, her father. Why, Henry, you don't mean to say you care anything for that girl?"

"And do you mean to say you haven't done everything you could to turn her head since she's been in this office? She used to like me well enough at school." All men are blind and jealous children alike when it comes to question of a woman between them, and this poor boy's passion was turning him wild. "Don't come to *me* with your lies any more!" Here his rage culminated, and with a blind cry of "Ay!" he struck the paper which he had kept in his hand into Bartley's face.

The demons, whatever they were, of anger, remorse, pride, shame, were at work in Bartley's heart too, and

he returned the blow as instantly as if Bird's touch had set the mechanism of his arm in motion. In contempt of the other's weakness, he struck with the flat of his hand; but the blow was enough. Bird fell headlong, and the concussion of his head upon the floor did the rest. He lay senseless.

VII.

BARTLEY hung over the boy with such a terror in his soul as he had never had before. He believed that he had killed him, and in this conviction came, with the simultaneity of events in dreams, the sense of all his blame, of which the blow given for a blow seemed the least part. He was not so wrong in that as he was wrong in what led to it. He did not abhor in himself so much the wretch who had struck his brother down as the light and empty fool who had trifled with that silly hoyden. The follies that seemed so amusing and resultless in their time had ripened to this bitter effect, and he knew that he and not she was mainly culpable. Her self-betrayal, however it came about, was proof that they were more serious with her than with him, and he could not plead to himself even the poor excuse that his fancy had been caught. Amidst the anguish of his self-condemnation, the need to conceal what he had done occurred to him. He had been holding Bird's head in his arms, and imploring him, "Henry, Henry, wake up!" in a low husky voice; but now

he turned to the door and locked it, and the lie by which he should escape sprang to his tongue. "He died in a fit." He almost believed it, as it murmured itself from his lips. There was no mark, no bruise, nothing to show that he had touched the boy. Suddenly he felt the lie choke him. He pulled down the window to let in the fresh air, and this pure breath of heaven blew into his darkened spirit and lifted there a little the vapours which were thickening in it. The horror of having to tell that lie, even if he should escape by it, all his life long, till he was a grey old man, and to keep the truth for ever from his lips, presented itself to him as intolerable slavery. "Oh, my God!" he spoke aloud, "how can I bear that?" And it was in self-pity that he revolted from it. Few men love the truth for its own sake, and Bartley was not one of these; but he practised it because his experience had been that lies were difficult to manage, and that they were a burden on the mind. He was not candid; he did not shun concealments and evasions; but positive lies he had kept from, and now he could not trust one to save his life. He unlocked the door, and ran out to find help; he must do that at last; he must do it at any risk; no matter what he said afterward. When our deeds and motives come to be balanced at the last day, let us hope that mercy and not justice may prevail.

It must have been mercy that sent the doctor at that moment to the apothecary's, on the other side of the street, and enabled Bartley to get him up into his office without publicity or explanation other than that Henry Bird seemed to be in a fit. The doctor lifted the boy's head, and explored his bosom with his hand.

"Is he—is he dead?" gasped Bartley, and the words came so mechanically from his tongue that he began to believe he had not spoken them, when the doctor answered.

"No! How did this happen? Tell me exactly."

"We had a quarrel. He struck me. I knocked him down."

Bartley delivered up the truth, as a prisoner of war—or a captive brigand, perhaps—parts with his weapons one by one.

"Very well," said the doctor. "Get some water."

Bartley poured some out of the pitcher on his table, and the doctor wetting his handkerchief, drew it again and again over Bird's forehead.

"I never meant to hurt him," said Bartley. "I didn't even intend to strike him when he hit me."

"Intentions have very little to do with physical effects," replied the doctor sharply. "Henry!"

The boy opened his eyes, and muttering feebly "My head!" closed them again.

"There's a concussion here," said the doctor.

"We had better get him home. Drive my sleigh over, will you, from Smith's?"

Bartley went out into the glare of the sun, which beat upon him like the eye of the world. But the street was really empty, as it often was in the middle of the forenoon at Equity. The apothecary, who saw him untying the doctor's horse, came to his door, and said jocosely, "Hello, Doc! who 's sick?"

"I am," said Bartley, solemnly, and the apothecary laughed at his readiness. Bartley drove round to the back of the printing-office, where the farmers delivered his wood. "I thought we could get him out better that way," he explained, and the doctor, who had to befriend a great many concealments in his practice, silently spared Bartley's disingenuousness.

The rush of the cold air, as they drove rapidly down the street, with that limp shape between them, revived the boy, and he opened his eyes, and made an effort to hold himself erect, but he could not, and when they got him into the warm room at home, he fainted again. His mother had met them at the door of her poor little house, without any demonstration of grief or terror; she was far too well acquainted in her widowhood—bereft of all her children but this son—with sickness and death, to show even surprise, if she felt it. When Bartley broke out into his lamentable confession, "Oh, Mrs.

Bird! this is *my* work!" she only wrung her hands and answered, "*Your* work! Oh, Mr. Hubbard, he thought the world of *you!*" and did not ask him how or why he had done it. After they had got Henry on the bed, Bartley was no longer of use there; but they let him remain in the corner into which he had shrunk, and from which he watched all that went on, with a dry mouth and faltering breath. It began to appear to him that he was very young to be involved in a misfortune like this; he did not understand why it should have happened to him; but he promised himself that if Henry lived he would try to be a better man in every way.

After he had lost all hope, the time seemed so long, the boy on the bed opened his eyes, once more, and looked round, while Bartley still sat with his face in his hands. "Where—where is Mr. Hubbard?" he faintly asked, with a bewildered look at his mother and the doctor.

Bartley heard the weak voice, and staggered forward, and fell on his knees beside the bed. "Here, here! Here I am, Henry! Oh, Henry, I didn't intend—" He stopped at the word and hid his face in the coverlet.

The boy lay as if trying to make out what had happened, and the doctor explained that he had fainted. After a time, he put out his hand and laid

it on Bartley's head. "Yes; but I don't understand what makes him cry."

They looked at Bartley, who had lifted his head, and he went over the whole affair, except so far as it related to Hannah Morrison; he did not spare himself; he had often found that strenuous self-condemnation moved others to compassion; and besides, it was his nature to seek the relief of full confession. But Henry heard him through with a blank countenance. "Don't you remember?" Bartley implored at last.

"No, I don't remember. I only remember that there seemed to be something the matter with my head this morning."

"That was the trouble with me, too," said Bartley. "I must have been crazy—I must have been insane—when I struck you. I can't account for it."

"I don't remember it," answered the boy.

"That's all right," said the doctor. "Don't try. I guess you better let him alone, now," he added to Bartley, with such a significant look that the young man retired from the bedside, and stood awkwardly apart. "He 'll get along. You needn't be anxious about leaving him. He 'll be better alone."

There was no mistaking this hint. "Well, well!" said Bartley, humbly, "I 'll go. But I 'd rather stay and watch with him—I sha'n't eat or sleep till he 's on foot again. And I can't leave till you tell me

that you forgive me, Mrs. Bird. I never dreamed—I didn't intend—" He could not go on.

"I don't suppose you meant to hurt Henry," said the mother. "You always pretended to be so fond of him, and he thought the world of you. But I don't see how you could do it. I presume it was all right."

"No, it was all wrong—or so nearly all wrong that I must ask your forgiveness on that ground. I loved him—I thought the world of him, too. I'd ten thousand times rather have hurt myself," pleaded Bartley. "Don't let me go till you say that you forgive me."

"I'll see how Henry gets along," said Mrs. Bird. "I don't know as I could rightly say I forgive you just yet."

Doubtless she was dealing conscientiously with herself and with him. "I like to be sure of a thing when I say it," she added.

The doctor followed him into the hall, and Bartley could not help turning to him for consolation. "I think Mrs. Bird is very unjust, Doctor. I've done everything I could, and said everything—to explain the matter; and I've blamed myself where I can't feel that I was to blame; and yet you see how she holds out against me."

"I daresay," answered the doctor, drily, "she'll feel differently, as she says, if the boy gets well."

Bartley dropped his hat to the floor. "Get well! Why—why, you think he 'll get well *now*, don't you, Doctor?"

"Oh, yes; I was merely using her words. He 'll get well."

"And—and it won't affect his mind, will it? I thought it was very strange his not remembering anything about it—"

"That 's a very common phenomenon," said the doctor. "The patient usually forgets everything that occurred for some little time before the accident, in cases of concussion of the brain." Bartley shuddered at the phrase, but he could not ask anything further. "What I wanted to say to you," continued the doctor, "was, that this may be a long thing, and there may have to be an inquiry into it. You 're lawyer enough to understand what that means. I should have to testify to what I know, and I only know what you told me."

"Why, you don't doubt—"

"No, sir; I 've no reason to suppose you haven't told me the truth, as far as it goes. If you have thought it advisable to keep anything back from me, you may wish to tell the whole story to an attorney."

"I haven't kept anything back, Doctor Wills," said Bartley. "I 've told you everything—everything that concerned the quarrel. That drunken old

scoundrel of a Morrison got us into it. He accused me of making up to his daughter; and Henry was jealous—I never knew he cared anything for her. I hated to tell you this before his mother. But this is the whole truth, so help me God."

"I supposed it was something of the kind," replied the doctor. "I'm sorry for you. You can't keep it from having an ugly look if it gets out; and it may have to be made public. I advise you to go and see Squire Gaylord; he's always stood your friend."

"I—I was just going there," said Bartley; and this was true.

Through all, he had felt the need of some sort of retrieval; of re-establishing himself in his own esteem, by some signal stroke; and he could think of but one thing. It was not his fault if he believed that this must combine self-sacrifice with safety, and the greatest degree of humiliation with the largest sum of consolation. He was none the less resolved not to spare himself at all in offering to release Marcia from her engagement. The fact that he must now also see her father upon the legal aspect of his case certainly complicated the affair, and detracted from its heroic quality. He could not tell which to see first, for he naturally wished his action to look as well as possible; and if he went first to Marcia, and she condemned him, he did not know in

what figure he should approach her father. If, on the other hand, he went first to Squire Gaylord, the old lawyer might insist that the engagement was already at an end by Bartley's violent act, and might well refuse to let a man in his position even see his daughter. He lagged heavy-heartedly up the middle of the street, and left the question to solve itself at the last moment. But when he reached Squire Gaylord's gate, it seemed to him that it would be easier to face the father first; and this would be the right way, too.

He turned aside to the little office, and opened the door without knocking, and as he stood with the knob in his hand, trying to habituate his eyes, full of the snow-glare, to the dimmer light within, he heard a rapturous cry of "Why, Bartley!" and he felt Marcia's arms flung around his neck. His burdened heart yearned upon her with a tenderness he had not known before; he realised the preciousness of an embrace that might be the last; but he dared not put down his lips to hers. She pushed back her head in a little wonder, and saw the haggardness of his face, while he discovered her father looking at them. How strong and pure the fire in her must be when her father's presence could not abash her from this betrayal of her love! Bartley sickened, and he felt her arms slip from his neck. "Why—why—what is the matter?"

In spite of some vaguely magnanimous intention to begin at the beginning, and tell the whole affair just as it happened, Bartley found himself wishing to put the best face on it at first, and trust to chances to make it all appear well. He did not speak at once, and Marcia pressed him into a chair, and then, like an eager child who will not let its friend escape till it has been told what it wishes to know, she set herself on his knee, and put her hand on his shoulder. He looked at her father, not at her, while he spoke hoarsely: "I have had trouble with Henry Bird, Squire Gaylord, and I 've come to tell you about it."

The old Squire did not speak, but Marcia repeated in amazement, "With Henry Bird?"

"He struck me—"

"Henry Bird *struck* you!" cried the girl. "I should like to know why Henry Bird struck *you*, when you 've made so much of him, and he 's always pretended to be so grateful!"

Bartley still looked at her father. "And I knocked him down."

"You did perfectly right, Bartley," exclaimed Marcia, "and I should have despised you if you had let any one run over you. Struck you! I declare—"

He did not heed her, but continued to look at her father. "I didn't intend to hurt him—I hit him

with my open hand—but he fell and struck his head on the floor. I 'm afraid it hurt him pretty badly." He felt the pang that thrilled through the girl at his words, and her hand trembled on his shoulder; but she did not take it away.

The old man came forward from the pile of books which he and Marcia had been dusting, and sat down in a chair on the other side of the stove. He pushed back his hat from his forehead, and asked drily, "What commenced it?"

Bartley hesitated. It was this part of the affair which he would rather have imparted to Marcia after seeing it with her father's eyes, or possibly, if her father viewed it favourably, have had him tell her. The old man noticed his reluctance. "Hadn't you better go into the house, Marsh?"

She merely gave him a look of utter astonishment for answer, and did not move. He laughed noiselessly, and said to Bartley, "Go on."

"It was that drunken old scoundrel of a Morrison who began it!" cried Bartley, in angry desperation. Marcia dropped her hand from his shoulder, while her father worked his jaws upon the bit of stick he had picked up from the pile of wood, and put between his teeth. "You know that whenever he gets on a spree he comes to the office and wants Hannah's wages raised."

Marcia sprang to her feet. "Oh, I knew it! I

knew it! I told you she would get you into trouble! I told you so!" She stood clinching her hands, and her father bent his keen scrutiny first upon her, and then upon the frowning face with which Bartley regarded her.

"Did he come to have her wages raised to-day?"

"No."

"What did he come for?" He involuntarily assumed the attitude of a lawyer cross-questioning a slippery witness.

"He came for— He came— He accused me of— He said I had—made love to his confounded girl."

Marcia gasped.

"What made him think you had?"

"It wasn't necessary for him to have any reason. He was drunk. I had been kind to the girl, and favoured her all I could, because she seemed to be anxious to do her work well; and I praised her for trying."

"Um-umph," commented the Squire. "And that made Henry Bird jealous?"

"It seems that he was fond of her. I never dreamed of such a thing, and when I put old Morrison out of the office, and came back, he called me a liar, and struck me in the face." He did not lift his eyes to the level of Marcia's, who in her grey dress stood there like a grey shadow, and did not stir or speak.

"And you never had made up to the girl at all?"

"No."

"Kissed her, I suppose, now and then?" suggested the Squire.

Bartley did not reply.

"Flattered her up, and told how much you thought of her, occasionally?"

"I don't see what that has to do with it," said Bartley with a sulky defiance.

"No, I suppose it 's what you 'd do with most any pretty girl," returned the Squire. He was silent a while. "And so you knocked Henry down. What happened then?"

"I tried to bring him to, and then I went for the doctor. He revived, and we got him home to his mother's. The doctor says he will get well; but he advised me to come and see you."

"Any witnesses of the assault?"

"No; we were alone in my own room."

"Told any one else about it?"

"I told the doctor and Mrs. Bird. Henry couldn't remember it at all."

"Couldn't remember about Morrison, or what made him mad at you?"

"Nothing."

"And that 's all about it?"

"Yes."

The two men had talked across the stove at each

other, practically ignoring the girl, who stood apart from them, grey in the face as her dress, and suppressing a passion which had turned her as rigid as stone.

"Now, Marcia," said her father, kindly, "better go into the house. That 's all there is of it."

"No, that isn't all," she answered. "Give me my ring, Bartley. Here 's yours." She slipped it off her finger, and put it into his mechanically extended hand.

"Marcia!" he implored, confronting her.

"Give me my ring, please."

He obeyed, and put it into her hand. She slipped it back on the finger from which she had so fondly suffered him to take it yesterday, and replace it with his own.

"I 'll go into the house now, father. Good-bye, Bartley." Her eyes were perfectly clear and dry, and her voice controlled; and as he stood passive before her, she took him round the neck, and pressed against his face, once, and twice, and thrice, her own grey face, in which all love and unrelenting and despair were painted. Once and again she held him, and looked him in the eyes, as if to be sure it was he. Then, with a last pressure of her face to his, she released him, and passed out of the door.

"She 's been talking about you, here, all the morning," said the Squire, with a sort of quiet

absence, as if nothing in particular had happened, and he were commenting on a little fact that might possibly interest Bartley. He ruminated upon the fragment of wood in his mouth a while before he added: "I guess she won't want to talk about you any more. I drew you out a little on that Hannah Morrison business, because I wanted her to understand just what kind of fellow you were. You see it isn't the trouble you've got into with Henry Bird that's killed her; it's the cause of the trouble. I guess if it had been anything else, she'd have stood by you. But you see that's the one thing she couldn't bear, and I'm glad it's happened now instead of afterwards: I guess you're one of that *kind*, Mr. Hubbard."

"Squire Gaylord!" cried Bartley, "upon my sacred word of honour, there isn't any more of this thing than I've told you. And I think it's pretty hard to be thrown over for—for—"

"Fooling with a pretty girl, when you get a chance, and the girl seems to like it? Yes, it *is* rather hard. And I suppose you haven't even seen her since you were engaged to Marcia?"

"Of course not! That is—"

"It's a kind of retroactive legislation on Marcia's part," said the Squire, rubbing his chin, "and that's against one of the first principles of law. But women don't seem to be able to grasp that idea.

They 're queer about some things. They appear to think they marry a man's whole life—his past as well as his future, and that makes 'em particular. And they distinguish between different kinds of men. You 'll find 'em pinning their faith to a fellow who 's been through pretty much everything, and swearing by him from the word go; and another chap, who 's never *done* anything very bad, they won't trust half a minute out of their sight. Well, I guess Marcia *is* of rather a jealous disposition," he concluded, as if Bartley had urged this point.

"She 's very unjust to me," Bartley began.

"Oh, yes—she 's *unjust*," said her father. "I don't deny that. But it wouldn't be any use talking to her. She 'd probably turn round with some excuse about what she had suffered, and that would be the end of it. She would say that she couldn't go through it again. Well, it ought to be a comfort to you to think you don't care a great deal about it."

"But I *do* care!" exclaimed Bartley. "I care all the world for it. I—"

"Since when?" interrupted the Squire. "Do you mean to say that you didn't know till you asked her yesterday that Marcia was in love with you?"

Bartley was silent.

"I guess you knew it as much as a year ago,

didn't you? Everybody else did. But you'd just as soon it had been Hannah Morrison, or any other pretty girl. *You* didn't care! But Marcia did, you see. She wasn't one of the kind that let any good-looking fellow make love to them. It was because it was *you;* and you knew it. We're plain men, Mr. Hubbard; and I guess you'll get over this in time. I shouldn't wonder if you began to mend, right away."

Bartley found himself helpless in the face of this passionless sarcasm. He could have met stormy indignation or any sort of invective in kind; but the contemptuous irony with which his pretensions were treated, the cold scrutiny with which his motives were searched, was something he could not meet. He tried to pull himself together for some sort of protest, but he ended by hanging his head in silence. He always believed that Squire Gaylord had liked him, and here he was treating him like his bitterest enemy, and seeming to enjoy his misery. He could not understand it; he thought it extremely unjust, and past all the measure of his offence. This was true, perhaps; but it is doubtful if Bartley would have accepted any suffering, no matter how nicely proportioned, in punishment of his wrong-doing. He sat hanging his head, and taking his pain in rebellious silence, with a gathering hate in his heart for the old man.

"M-well!" said the Squire at last, rising from his chair, "I guess I must be going."

Bartley sprang to his feet aghast. "You're not going to leave me in the lurch, are you? You're not—"

"Oh, I shall take care of you, young man—don't be afraid. I've stood your friend too long, and your name's been mixed up too much with my girl's for me to let you come to shame openly, if I can help it. I'm going to see Dr. Wills about you, and I'm going to see Mrs. Bird, and try to patch it up somehow."

"And—and—where shall I go?" gasped Bartley.

"You might go to the devil, for all I care for you," said the old man, with the contempt which he no longer cared to make ironical. "But I guess you better go back to your office, and go to work as if nothing had happened—till something does happen. I shall close the paper out as soon as I can. I was thinking of doing that just before you came in. I was thinking of taking you into the law business with me. Marcia and I were talking about it here. But I guess you wouldn't like the idea now."

He seemed to get a bitter satisfaction out of these mockeries, from which, indeed, he must have suffered quite as much as Bartley. But he ended, sadly and almost compassionately, with, "Come, come! you must start sometime." And Bartley dragged his

leaden weight out of the door. The Squire closed it after him; but he did not accompany him down the street. It was plain that he did not wish to be any longer alone with Bartley, and the young man suspected, with a sting of shame, that he scorned to be seen with him.

VIII.

THE more Bartley dwelt upon his hard case, during the week that followed, the more it appeared to him that he was punished out of all proportion to his offence. He was in no mood to consider such mercies as that he had been spared from seriously hurting Bird; and that Squire Gaylord and Doctor Wills had united with Henry's mother in saving him from open disgrace. The physician, indeed, had perhaps indulged a professional passion for hushing the matter up, rather than any pity for Bartley. He probably had the scientific way of looking at such questions; and saw much physical cause for moral effects. He refrained, with the physician's reticence, from inquiring into the affair; but he would not have thought Bartley without excuse under the circumstances. In regard to the relative culpability in matters of the kind, his knowledge of woman enabled him to take much the view of the women's share that other women take.

But Bartley was ignorant of the doctor's leniency, and associated him with Squire Gaylord in the feeling that made his last week in Equity a period

of social outlawry. There were moments in which he could not himself escape the same point of view. He could rebel against the severity of the condemnation he had fallen under in the eyes of Marcia and her father; he could, in the light of example and usage, laugh at the notion of harm in his behaviour to Hannah Morrison; yet he found himself looking at it as a treachery to her. Certainly, she had no right to question his conduct before his engagement. Yet, if he knew that Marcia loved him, and was waiting with life-and-death anxiety for some word of love from him, it was cruelly false to play with another at the passion which was such a tragedy to her. This was the point that, put aside however often, still presented itself, and its recurrence, if he could have known it, was mercy and reprieve from the only source out of which these could come.

Hannah Morrison did not return to the printing-office, and Bird was still sick, though it was now only a question of time when he should be out again. Bartley visited him some hours every day, and sat and suffered under the quiet condemnation of his mother's eyes. She had kept Bartley's secret with the same hardness with which she had refused him her forgiveness, and the village had settled down into an ostensible acceptance of the theory of a faint as the beginning of Bird's sickness, with such other

conjectures as the doctor freely permitted each to form. Bartley found his chief consolation in the work which kept him out of the way of a great deal of question. He worked far into the night, as he must, to make up for the force that was withdrawn from the office. At the same time he wrote more than ever in the paper, and he discovered in himself that dual life of which every one who sins or sorrows is sooner or later aware; that strange separation of the intellectual activity from the suffering of the soul, by which the mind toils on in a sort of ironical indifference to the pangs that wring the heart; the realisation that, in some ways, his brain can get on perfectly well without his conscience.

There was a great deal of sympathy felt for Bartley at this time, and his popularity in Equity was never greater than now, when his life there was drawing to a close. The spectacle of his diligence was so impressive that when, on the following Sunday, the young minister who had succeeded to the pulpit of the orthodox church preached a sermon on the beauty of industry from the text, "Consider the lilies," there were many who said that they thought of Bartley the whole while, and one—a lady—asked Mr. Savin if he did not have Mr. Hubbard in mind in the picture he drew of the Heroic Worker. They wished that Bartley could have heard that sermon.

Marcia had gone away early in the week to visit

in the town where she used to go to school, and Bartley took her going away as a sign that she wished to put herself wholly beyond his reach, or any danger of relenting at sight of him. He talked with no one about her; and going and coming irregularly to his meals, and keeping himself shut up in his room when he was not at work, he left people very little chance to talk with him. But they conjectured that he and Marcia had an understanding; and some of the ladies used such scant opportunity as he gave them to make sly allusions to her absence and his desolate condition. They were confirmed in their surmise by the fact, known from actual observation, that Bartley had not spoken a word to any other young lady since Marcia went away.

"Look here, my friend," said the philosopher from the logging-camp, when he came in for his paper on the Tuesday afternoon following; "seems to me from what I hear tell around here, you're tryin' to kill yourself on this newspaper. Now, it won't do; I tell you it won't do."

Bartley was addressing for the mail the papers which one of the girls was folding.

"What are you going to do about it?" he demanded of his sympathiser with whimsical sullenness, not troubling himself to look up at him.

"Well, I hain't exactly settled yet," replied the

philosopher, who was of a tall, lank figure, and of a mighty brown beard. "But I've been around pretty much everywhere, and I find that about the poorest use you can put a man to is to kill him."

"It depends a good deal on the man," said Bartley. "But that's stale, Kinney. It's the old formula of the anti-capital-punishment fellows. Try something else. They're not talking of hanging me yet." He kept on writing, and the philosopher stood over him with a humorous twinkle of enjoyment at Bartley's readiness.

"Well, I'll allow it's old," he admitted. "So's Homer."

"Yes; but you don't pretend that you wrote Homer."

Kinney laughed mightily; then he leaned forward and slapped Bartley on the shoulder with his newspaper.

"Look here!" he exclaimed, "I *like* you!"

"Oh, try some other tack! Lots of fellows like me." Bartley kept on writing. "I gave you your paper, didn't I, Kinney?"

"You mean that you want me to get out?"

"Far be it from me to say so."

This delighted Kinney as much as the last refinement of hospitality would have pleased another man.

"Look here!" he said, "I want you should come

out and see our camp. I can't fool away any more time on you here, but I want you should come out and see us. Give you something to write about. Hey?"

"The invitation comes at a time when circumstances over which I have no control oblige me to decline it. I admire your prudence, Kinney."

"No, honest Injian, now," protested Kinney. "Take a day off, and fill up with dead advertisements. That's the way they used to do out in Alkali City when they got short of help on the *Eagle*, and we liked it just as well."

"Now you are talking sense," said Bartley, looking up at him. "How far is it to your settlement?"

"Two miles if you're goin'; three and a half, if you ain't."

"When are you coming in again?"

"I'm in, now."

"I can't go with you to-day."

"Well, how 'll to-morrow morning suit?"

"To-morrow morning will suit," said Bartley.

"All right. If anybody comes to see the editor to-morrow morning, Marilla," said Kinney to the girl, "you tell 'm he's sick, and gone a-loggin', and won't be back till Saturday. Say," he added, laying his hand on Bartley's shoulder, "you ain't foolin'?"

"If I am," replied Bartley, "just mention it."

"Good!" said Kinney. "To-morrow it is, then."

Bartley finished addressing the newspapers, and

then he put them up in wrappers and packages for the mail.

"You can go now, Marilla," he said to the girl. "I'll have some copy for you and Kitty, you'll find it on my table in the morning."

"All right," answered the girl.

Bartley went to his supper, which he ate with more relish than he had felt for his meals since his troubles began, and he took part in the supper-table talk with something of his old audacity. The change interested the lady boarders, and they agreed that he must have had a letter. He returned to his office, and worked till nine o'clock, writing and selecting matter out of his exchanges. He spent most of the time in preparing the funny column, which was a favourite feature in the *Free Press*. Then he put the copy where the girls would find it in the morning, and, leaving the door unlocked, took his way up the street toward Squire Gaylord's.

He knew that he should find the lawyer in his office, and he opened the office-door without knocking, and went in. He had not met Squire Gaylord since the morning of his dismissal, and the old man had left him for the past eight days without any sign as to what he expected of Bartley, or what he intended to do in his affair.

They looked at each other, but exchanged no sort of greeting, as Bartley, unbidden, took a chair on

the opposite side of the stove; the Squire did not put down the book he had been reading.

"I've come to see what you're going to do about the *Free Press*," said Bartley.

The old man rubbed his bristling jaw, that seemed even lanker than when Bartley saw it last. He waited almost a minute before he replied—

"I don't know as I've got any call to tell you."

"Then I'll tell you what *I'm* going to do about it," retorted Bartley. "I'm going to leave it. I've done my last day's work on that paper. Do you think," he cried angrily, "that I'm going to keep on in the dark, and let you consult your pleasure as to my future? No, sir! You don't know your man quite, Mr. Gaylord!"

"You've got over your scare," said the lawyer.

"I've got over my scare," Bartley retorted.

"And you think, because you're not afraid any longer, that you're out of danger. I know my man as well as you do, I guess."

"If you think I care for the danger, I don't. You may do what you please. Whatever you do, I shall know it isn't out of kindness for me. I didn't believe from the first that the law could touch me, and I wasn't uneasy on that account. But I didn't want to involve myself in a public scandal for Miss Gaylord's sake. Miss Gaylord has released me from any obligations to her; and now you may go ahead

and do what you like." Each of the men knew how much truth there was in this; but for the moment, in his anger, Bartley believed himself sincere, and there is no question but his defiance was so. Squire Gaylord made him no answer, and after a minute of expectation Bartley added, "At any rate, I've done with the *Free Press*. I advise you to stop the paper, and hand the office over to Henry Bird, when he gets about. I'm going out to Willett's logging-camp to-morrow, and I'm coming back to Equity on Saturday. You'll know where to find me till then, and after that you may look me up if you want me."

He rose to go, but stopped with his hand on the door-knob, at a sound, preliminary to speaking, which the old man made in his throat. Bartley stopped, hoping for a further pretext of quarrel, but the lawyer merely asked—

"Where's the key?"

"It's in the office-door."

The old man now looked at him as if he no longer saw him, and Bartley went out, balked of his purpose in part, and in that degree so much the more embittered.

Squire Gaylord remained an hour longer; then he blew out his lamp, and left the little office for the night. A light was burning in the kitchen, and he made his way round to the back door of the house, and let himself in. His wife was there, sitting be-

fore the stove, in those last delicious moments before going to bed, when all the house is mellowed to such a warmth that it seems hard to leave it to the cold and dark. In this poor lady, who had so long denied herself spiritual comfort, there was a certain obscure luxury: she liked little dainties of the table; she liked soft warmth, an easy cushion. It was doubtless in the disintegration of the finer qualities of her nature, that as they grew older together, she threw more and more the burden of acute feeling upon her husband, to whose doctrine of life she had submitted, but had never been reconciled. Marriage is, with all its disparities, a much more equal thing than appears, and the meek little wife, who has all the advantage of public sympathy, knows her power over her oppressor, and at some tender spot in his affections or his nerves can inflict an anguish that will avenge her for years of coarser aggression. Thrown in upon herself in so vital a matter as her religion, Mrs. Gaylord had involuntarily come to live largely for herself, though her talk was always of her husband. She gave up for him, as she believed, her soul's salvation, but she held him to account for the uttermost farthing of the price. She padded herself round at every point where she could have suffered through her sensibilities, and lived soft and snug in the shelter of his iron will and indomitable courage. It was not apathy that she showed when

their children died one after another, but an obscure and formless exultation that Mr. Gaylord would suffer enough for both.

Marcia was the youngest, and her mother left her training almost wholly to her father; she sometimes said that she never supposed the child would live. She did not actually urge this in excuse, but she had the appearance of doing so; and she held aloof from them both in their mutual relations, with mildly critical reserves. They spoiled each other, as father and daughter are apt to do when left to themselves. What was good in the child certainly received no harm from his indulgence; and what was naughty was after all not so very naughty. She was passionate, but she was generous; and if she showed a jealous temperament that must hereafter make her unhappy, for the time being it charmed and flattered her father to have her so fond of him that she could not endure any rivalry in his affection.

Her education proceeded fitfully. He would not let her be forced to household tasks that she disliked; and as a little girl she went to school chiefly because she liked to go, and not because she would have been obliged to if she had not chosen. When she grew older, she wished to go away to school, and her father allowed her; he had no great respect for boarding-schools, but if Marcia wanted to try it, he was willing to humour the joke.

What resulted was a great proficiency in the things that pleased her, and ignorance of the other things. Her father bought her a piano, on which she did not play much, and he bought her whatever dresses she fancied. He never came home from a journey without bringing her something; and he liked to take her with him when he went away to other places. She had been several times at Portland, and once at Montreal; he was very proud of her; he could not see that any one was better-looking, or dressed any better than his girl.

He came into the kitchen, and sat down with his hat on, and taking his chin between his fingers, moved uneasily about on his chair.

"What's brought you in so early?" asked his wife.

"Well, I got through," he briefly explained. After a while he said, "Bartley Hubbard's been out there."

"You don't mean 't he knew she—"

"No, he didn't know anything about that. He came to tell me he was going away."

"Well, I don't know what you're going to do, Mr. Gaylord," said his wife, shifting the responsibility wholly upon him. "D' he seem to want to make it up?"

"M-no!" said the Squire, "he was on his high horse. He knows he ain't in any danger now."

"Ain't you afraid she 'll carry on dreadfully when she finds out 't he 's gone for good?" asked Mrs. Gaylord, with a sort of implied satisfaction that the carrying on was not to affect her.

"M-yes," said the Squire, "I suppose she 'll carry on. But I don't know what to do about it. Sometimes I almost wish I 'd tried to make it up between 'em that day; but I thought she 'd better see, once for all, what sort of man she was going in for, if she married him. It 's too late now to do anything. The fellow came in to-night for a quarrel, and nothing else; I could see that; and I didn't give him any chance."

"You feel sure," asked Mrs. Gaylord impartially, "that Marcia wa'n't too particular?"

"No, Miranda, I don't feel sure of anything, except that it 's past your bed-time. You better go, I 'll sit up a while yet. I came in because I couldn't settle my mind to anything out there."

He took off his hat in token of his intending to spend the rest of the evening at home, and put it on the table at his elbow.

His wife sewed at the mending in her lap without offering to act upon his suggestion.

"It 's plain to be seen that she can't get along without him."

"She 'll have to, now," replied the Squire.

"I 'm afraid," said Mrs. Gaylord softly, "that

she 'll be down sick. She don't look as if she'd slept any great deal since she 's been gone. I d' know as I like very much to see her looking the way she does. I guess you 've got to take her off somewheres."

"Why, she 's just been off, and couldn't stay!"

"That 's because she thought he was here yet. But if he 's gone, it won't be the same thing."

"Well, we 've got to fight it out, some way," said the Squire. "It wouldn't do to give in to it now. It always *was* too much of a one-sided thing, at the best; and if we tried now to mend it up, it would be ridiculous. I don't believe he would come back at all now, and if he did, he wouldn't come back on any equal terms. He 'd want to have everything his own way. M-no!" said the Squire, as if confirming himself in a conclusion often reached already in his own mind, "I saw by the way he began to-night that there wasn't anything to be done with him. It was fight from the word go."

"Well," said Mrs. Gaylord, with gentle sceptical interest in the outcome, "if you 've made up your mind to that, I hope you 'll be able to carry it through."

"That 's what I 've made up my mind to," said her husband.

Mrs. Gaylord rolled up the sewing in her work-basket, and packed it away against the side, bracing it with several pairs of newly-darned socks and

stockings neatly folded one into the other. She took her time for this, and when she rose at last to go out, with her basket in her hand, the door opened in her face, and Marcia entered. Mrs. Gaylord shrank back, and then slipped round behind her daughter and vanished. The girl took no notice of her mother, but went and sat down on her father's knee, throwing her arms round his neck, and dropping her haggard face on his shoulder. She had arrived at home a few hours earlier, having driven over from a station ten miles distant, on a road that did not pass near Equity. After giving as much of a shock to her mother's mild nature as it was capable of receiving by her unexpected return, she had gone to her own room, and remained ever since without seeing her father. He put up his thin old hand and passed it over her hair, but it was long before either of them spoke.

At last Marcia lifted her head, and looked her father in the face, with a smile so pitiful that he could not bear to meet it.

"Well, father?" she said.

"Well, Marsh," he answered huskily.

"What do you think of me now?"

"I 'm glad to have you back again," he replied.

"You know why I came?"

"Yes, I guess I know."

She put down her head again, and moaned and

cried, "Father! Father!" with dry sobs. When she looked up, confronting him with her tearless eyes, "What shall I do? What shall I do?" she demanded desolately.

He tried to clear his throat to speak, but it required more than one effort to bring the words.

"I guess you better go along with me up to Boston. I 'm going up the first of the week."

"No," she said quietly.

"The change would do you good. It 's a long while since you 've been away from home," her father urged.

She looked at him in sad reproach of his uncandour.

"You know there 's nothing the matter with me, father. You know what the trouble is."

He was silent. He could not face the trouble.

"I 've heard people talk of a heart-ache," she went on. "I never believed there was really such a thing. But I know there is now. There 's a pain here." She pressed her hand against her breast. "It 's sore with aching. What shall I do? I shall have to live through it somehow."

"If you don't feel exactly well," said her father, I guess you better see the doctor."

"What shall I tell him is the matter with me? That I want Bartley Hubbard?" He winced at the words, but she did not. "He knows that already.

Everybody in town does. It's never been any secret. I couldn't hide it, from the first day I saw him. I'd just as lief as not they should say I was dying for him. I shall not care what they say when I'm dead."

"You oughtn't—you oughtn't to talk that way, Marcia," said her father gently.

"What difference?" she demanded scornfully.

There was truly no difference, so far as concerned any creed of his, and he was too honest to make further pretence.

"What shall I do?" she went on again. "I've thought of praying; but what would be the use?"

"I've never denied that there was a God, Marcia," said her father.

"Oh, I know. *That* kind of God! Well, well! I know that I talk like a crazy person! Do you suppose it was providential my being with you in the office that morning when Bartley came in?"

"No," said her father, "I don't. I think it was an accident."

"Mother said it was providential, my finding him out before it was too late."

"I think it was a good thing. The fellow has the making of a first-class scoundrel in him."

"Do you think he's a scoundrel now?" she asked quietly.

"He hasn't had any great opportunity yet," said the old man, conscientiously sparing him.

"Well, then, I'm sorry I found him out. Yes! If I hadn't, I might have married him, and perhaps if I had died soon I might never have found him out. He could have been good to me a year or two, and then, if I died, I should have been safe. Yes, I wish he could have deceived me till after we were married. Then I *couldn't* have borne to give him up, maybe."

"You *would* have given him up, even then. And that's the only thing that reconciles me to it now. I'm sorry for you, my girl; but you'd have made me sorrier then. Sooner or later he'd have broken your heart."

"He's broken it now," said the girl calmly.

"Oh no, he hasn't," replied her father with a false cheerfulness that did not deceive her. "You're young, and you'll get over it. I mean to take you away from here, for a while. I mean to take you up to Boston, and on to New York. I shouldn't care if we went as far as Washington. I guess when you've seen a little more of the world, you won't think Bartley Hubbard's the only one in it."

She looked at him so intently that he thought she must be pleased at this proposal.

"Do you think I could get him back?" she asked.

Her father lost his patience; it was a relief to be angry.

"No, I don't think so. I know you couldn't. And you ought to be ashamed of mentioning such a thing!"

"Oh, ashamed! No, I've got past that. I have no shame any more where he's concerned. Oh, I'd give the world if I could call him back—if I could only undo what I did! I was wild; I wasn't reasonable; I wouldn't listen to him. I drove him away without giving him a chance to say a word! Of course, he must hate me now. What makes you think he wouldn't come back?" she asked.

"I know he wouldn't," answered her father, with a sort of groan. "He's going to leave Equity for one thing, and—"

"Going to leave Equity?" she repeated absently. Then he felt her tremble. "How do you know he's going?" She turned upon her father, and fixed him sternly with her eyes.

"Do you suppose he would stay after what's happened any longer than he could help?"

"How do you know he's going?" she repeated.

"He told me."

She stood up.

"He told you? When?"

"To-night."

"Why, where—where did you see him?" she whispered.

"In the office."

"Since—since—I came? Bartley been here! And you didn't tell me—you didn't let me know?"

They looked at each other in silence.

At last, "When is he going?" she asked.

"To-morrow morning."

She sat down in the chair which her mother had left, and clutched the back of another, on which her fingers opened and closed convulsively, while she caught her breath in irregular gasps. She broke into a low moaning at last, the expression of abject defeat in the struggle she had waged with herself. Her father watched her with dumb compassion. "Better go to bed, Marcia," he said, with the same dry calm as if he had been sending her away after some pleasant evening which she had suffered to run too far into the night.

"Don't you think—don't you think—he 'll have to see you again before he goes?" she made out to ask.

"No; he 's finished up with me," said the old man.

"Well, then," she cried desperately, "you 'll have to go to him, father, and get him to come! I can't help it! I can't give him up! You 've got to go to him, now, father—yes, yes, you have! You 've got to go and tell him. Go and get him to come, for *mercy's* sake! Tell him that I 'm sorry—that I beg his pardon—that I didn't think —I didn't understand—that I knew he didn't do anything wrong—"

She rose, and, placing her hand on her father's shoulder, accented each entreaty with a little push.

He looked up into her face with a haggard smile of sympathy.

"You 're crazy, Marcia," he said gently.

"Don't laugh!" she cried. "I 'm not crazy now. But I was then—yes, stark, staring crazy. Look here, father! I want to tell you—I want to explain to you!" She dropped upon his knee again, and tremblingly passed her arm round his neck. "You see, I had just told him the day before that I shouldn't care for anything that happened before we were engaged, and then at the very first thing I went and threw him off! And I had no right to do it. He knows that, and that 's what makes him so hard towards me. But if you go and tell him that I see now I was all wrong, and that I beg his pardon, and then ask him to give me *one* more trial, just one *more*—you can do as much as that for me, can't you?"

"Oh you poor crazy girl!" groaned her father. "Don't you see that the trouble is in what the fellow *is*, and not in any particular thing that he 's done? He 's a scamp, through and through; and he 's all the more a scamp when he doesn't know it. He hasn't got the first idea of anything but selfishness."

"No, no! Now, I 'll tell you—now I 'll prove it

to you. That very Sunday when we were out riding together; and we met her and her mother, and their sleigh upset, and he had to lift her back; and it made me wild to see him, and I wouldn't hardly touch him or speak to him afterwards, he didn't say one angry word to me. He just pulled me up to him, and wouldn't let me be mad; and he said that night he didn't mind a bit, because it showed how much I liked him. Now, doesn't that prove he 's good—a good deal better than I am, and that he 'll forgive me, if you 'll go and ask him? I know he isn't in bed yet; he always sits up late—he told me so; and you 'll find him there in his room. Go straight to his room, father; don't let anybody see you down in the office; I couldn't bear it; and slip out with him as quietly as you can. But, oh, do hurry now! Don't lose another minute!"

The wild joy sprang into her face, as her father rose; a joy that it was terrible to him to see die out of it as he spoke—

"I tell you it 's no use, Marcia! He wouldn't come if I went to him—"

"Oh, yes—yes, he would! I know he would! If—"

"He wouldn't! You 're mistaken! I should have to get down in the dust for nothing. He 's a bad fellow, I tell you; and you 've got to give him up."

"You hate me!" cried the girl. The old man walked to and fro, clutching his hands. Their lives had always been in such intimate sympathy, his life had so long had her happiness for its sole pleasure, that the pang in her heart racked his with as sharp an agony. "Well, I shall die; and then I hope you will be satisfied."

"Marcia, Marcia!" pleaded her father. "You don't know what you 're saying."

"You 're letting him go away from me—you 're letting me lose him—you 're killing me!"

"He wouldn't come, my girl. It would be perfectly useless to go to him. You *must*—you *must* try to control yourself, Marcia. There's no other way—there 's no other hope. You 're disgraceful. You ought to be ashamed. You ought to have some pride about you. I don't know what 's come over you since you 've been with that fellow. You seem to be out of your senses. But try—try, my girl, to get over it. If you 'll fight it, you 'll conquer yet. You 've got a spirit for anything. And I 'll help you, Marcia. I 'll take you anywhere. I 'll do anything for you—"

"You wouldn't go to him, and ask him to come here, if it would save his life!"

"No," said the old man, with a desperate quiet, "I wouldn't."

She stood looking at him, and then she sank

suddenly, and straight down, as if she were sinking through the floor. When he lifted her, he saw that she was in a dead faint, and while the swoon lasted would be out of her misery. The sight of this had wrung him so that he had a kind of relief in looking at her lifeless face; and he was slow in laying her down again, like one that fears to wake a sleeping child. Then he went to the foot of the stairs, and softly called to his wife—"Miranda! Miranda!"

IX.

KINNEY came into town the next morning bright and early, as he phrased it; but he did not stop at the hotel for Bartley till nine o'clock. "Thought I 'd give you time for breakfast," he exclaimed, "and so I didn't hurry up any about gettin' in my supplies."

It was a beautiful morning, so blindingly sunny that Bartley winked as they drove up through the glistening street, and was glad to dip into the gloom of the first woods; it was not cold; the snow felt the warmth, and packed moistly under their runners. The air was perfectly still; at a distance on the mountain-sides it sparkled as if full of diamond-dust. Far overhead some crows called.

"The sun 's getting high," said Bartley, with the light sigh of one to whom the thought of spring brings no hope.

"Well, I shouldn't begin to plough for corn just yet," replied Kinney. "It 's curious," he went on, "to see how anxious we are to have a thing over, it don't much matter what it is, whether it 's summer or winter. I suppose we 'd feel different if we wa'n't sure there was going to be another of 'em.

I guess that's one reason why the Lord concluded not to keep us clearly posted on the question of another life. If it wa'n't for the uncertainty of the thing, there are a lot of fellows, like you, that wouldn't stand it here a minute. Why, if we had a dead sure thing of Over-the-River—good climate, plenty to eat and wear, and not much to do—I don't believe any of us would keep Darling Minnie waiting, well, a *great* while. But you see, the thing 's all on paper, and that makes us cautious, and willing to hang on here a while longer. Looks splendid on the map: streets regularly laid out; public squares; band-stands; churches; solid blocks of houses, with all the modern improvements; but you can't tell whether there 's any town there till you 're on the ground; and then, if you don't like it, there 's no way of gettin' back to the States."

He turned round upon Bartley and opened his mouth wide, to imply that this was pleasantry.

"Do you throw your philosophy in, all under the same price, Kinney?" asked the young fellow.

"Well, yes; I never charge anything over," said Kinney. "You see, I have a good deal of time to think when I 'm around by myself all day, and the philosophy don't cost me anything, and the fellows like it. Roughing it the way they do, they can stand 'most anything. Hey?" He now not only opened his mouth upon Bartley, but thrust

him in the side with his elbow, and then laughed noisily.

Kinney was the cook. He had been over pretty nearly the whole uninhabitable globe, starting as a gaunt and awkward boy from the Maine woods, and keeping until he came back to them in late middle-life the same gross and ridiculous optimism. He had been at sea, and shipwrecked on several islands in the Pacific; he had passed a rainy season at Panama, and a yellow fever season at Vera Cruz, and had been carried far into the interior of Peru by a tidal-wave during an earthquake season; he was in the Border Ruffian War of Kansas, and he clung to California till prosperity deserted her after the completion of the Pacific road. Wherever he went he carried or found adversity; but with a heart fed on the metaphysics of Horace Greeley, and buoyed up by a few wildly interpreted maxims of Emerson, he had always believed in other men, and their fitness for the terrestrial millennium which was never more than ten days or ten miles off. It is not necessary to say that he had continued as poor as he had begun, and that he was never able to contribute to those railroads, mills, elevators, towns, and cities which were sure to be built, sir, sure to be built, wherever he went. When he came home at last to the woods, some hundreds of miles north of Equity, he found that some one had realised

his early dream of a summer hotel on the shore of the beautiful lake there; and he unenviously settled down to admire the landlord's thrift, and to act as guide and cook for parties of young ladies and gentlemen who started from the hotel to camp in the woods. This brought him into the society of cultivated people, for which he had a real passion. He had always had a few thoughts rattling round in his skull, and he liked to make sure of them in talk with those who had enjoyed greater advantages than himself. He never begrudged them their luck; he simply and sweetly admired them; he made studies of their several characters, and was never tired of analysing them to their advantage to the next summer's parties. Late in the fall, he went in, as it is called, with a camp of loggers, among whom he rarely failed to find some remarkable men. But he confessed that he did not enjoy the steady three or four months in the winter woods with no coming out at all till spring; and he had been glad of this chance in a logging-camp near Equity, in which he had been offered the cook's place by the owner, who had tested his fare in the northern woods the summer before. Its proximity to the village allowed him to loaf in upon civilisation at least once a week, and he spent the greater part of his time at the *Free Press* office on publication day. He had always sought the society of news-

paper men, and wherever he could, he had given them his. He was not long in discovering that Bartley was smart as a steel trap; and by an early and natural transition from calling the young lady compositors by their pet names, and patting them on their shoulders, he had arrived at a like affectionate intimacy with Bartley.

As they worked deep into the woods on their way to the camp, the road dwindled to a well-worn track between the stumps and bushes. The ground was rough, and they constantly plunged down the slopes of little hills, and climbed the sides of the little valleys, and from time to time they had to turn out for teams drawing logs to the mills in Equity, each with its equipage of four or five wild young fellows, who saluted Kinney with an ironical cheer or jovial taunt in passing.

"They're all just so," he explained, with pride, when the last party had passed. "They're gentlemen, every one of 'em—perfect gentlemen."

They came at last to a wider clearing than any they had yet passed through, and here on a level of the hill-side stretched the camp, a long, low structure of logs, with the roof broken at one point by a stove-pipe, and the walls irregularly pierced by small windows; around it crouched and burrowed in the drift the sheds that served as stables and storehouses.

The sun shone, and shone with dazzling brightness, upon the opening; the sound of distant shouts and the rhythmical stroke of axes came to it out of the forest; but the camp was deserted, and in the stillness Kinney's voice seemed strange and alien.

"Walk in, walk in!" he said hospitably. "I've got to look after my horse."

But Bartley remained at the door, blinking in the sunshine, and harking to the near silence that sang in his ears. A curious feeling possessed him: sickness of himself as of some one else; a longing consciously helpless, to be something different; a sense of captivity to habits and thoughts and hopes that centred in himself, and served him alone.

"Terribly peaceful around here," said Kinney, coming back to him, and joining him in a survey of the landscape, with his hands on his hips, and a stem of timothy projecting from his lips.

"Yes, terribly," assented Bartley.

"But it *ain't* a bad way for a man to live, as long as he's young; or hain't got anybody that wants hi company more than his room.—Be the place for you."

"On which ground?" Bartley asked drily, without taking his eyes from a distant peak that showed through the notch in the forest.

Kinney laughed in as unselfish enjoyment as if he had made the turn himself.

"Well, that ain't exactly what I meant to say: what I meant was that any man engaged in intellectual pursuits wants to come out and commune with nature every little while."

"You call the Equity *Free Press* intellectual pursuits?" demanded Bartley, with scorn. "I suppose it is," he added. "Well, here I am—right on the commune. But nature's such a big thing, I think it takes two to commune with her."

"Well, a girl's a help," assented Kinney.

"I wasn't thinking of a girl, exactly," said Bartley, with a little sadness. "I mean that if you're not in first-rate spiritual condition, you're apt to get floored, if you undertake to commune with nature."

"I guess that's about so. If a man's got anything on his mind, a big railroad depot's the place for *him*. But you're run down. You ought to come out here and take a hand, and be a man amongst men." Kinney talked partly for quantity, and partly for pure, indefinite good-feeling.

Bartley turned toward the door. "What have you got inside, here?"

Kinney flung the door open, and followed his guest within. The first two-thirds of the cabin was used as a dormitory, and the sides were furnished with rough bunks from the ground to the roof. The round, unhewn logs showed their form everywhere; the crevices were calked with moss; and the walls

were warm and tight. It was dark between the bunks, but beyond it was lighter, and Bartley could see at the further end a vast cooking-stove and three long tables with benches at their sides. A huge coffee-pot stood on the top of the stove, and various pots and kettles surrounded it.

"Come into the dining-room and sit down in the parlour," said Kinney, drawing off his coat as he walked forward. "Take the sofa," he added, indicating a moveable bench. He hung his coat on a peg and rolled up his shirt-sleeves, and began to whistle cheerily, like a man who enjoys his work, as he threw open the stove-door and poked in some sticks of fuel. A brooding warmth filled the place, and the wood made a pleasant crackling as it took fire.

"Here's my desk," said Kinney, pointing to a barrel that supported a broad, smooth board-top. "This is where I compose my favourite works." He turned round and cut out of a mighty mass of dough in a tin trough a portion which he threw down on his table, and attacked with a rolling-pin. "That means pie, Mr. Hubbard," he explained, "and pie means meat-pie—or squash-pie, at a pinch. To-day 's pie-baking day. But you needn't be troubled on that account. So 's to-morrow, and so was yesterday. Pie twenty-one times a week is the word, and don't you forget it. They say old Agassiz," Kinney went

on in that easy familiar fondness with which our people like to speak of greatness that impresses their imagination, "they say old Agassiz recommended fish as the best food for the brain. Well, I don't suppose but what it is. But I don't know but what pie is more stimulating to the fancy. I *never* saw anything like meat-pie to make ye dream."

"Yes," said Bartley, nodding gloomily, "I 've tried it."

Kinney laughed.

"Well, I guess folks of sedentary pursuits, like you and me, don't need it; but these fellows that stamp round in the snow all day, they want something to keep their imagination goin'. And I guess pie does it. Anyway, they can't seem to get enough of it. Ever try apples when you was at work? They say old Greeley kep' his desk full of 'em; kep' munchin' away all the while when he was writin' his editorials. And one of them German poets—I don't know but what it was old Gutty himself—kept *rotten* ones in *his* drawer; liked the smell of 'em. Well, there 's a good deal of apple in meat-pie. Maybe it 's the apple that does it. *I* don't know. But I guess if your pursuits are sedentary, you better take the apple separate."

Bartley did not say anything; but he kept a lazily interested eye on Kinney as he rolled out his pie-crust, fitted it into his tins, filled these from a jar of

mince-meat, covered them with a sheet of dough pierced in herring-bone pattern, and marshalled them at one side ready for the oven.

"If fish *is* any better for the brain," Kinney proceeded, "they can't complain of any want of it, at least in the salted form. They get fish-balls three times a week for breakfast, as reg'lar as Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday comes round. And Fridays I make up a sort of chowder for the Kanucks; they 're Catholics, you know, and I don't believe in interferin with *any* man's religion, it don't matter what it is."

"You ought to be a deacon in the First Church at Equity," said Bartley.

"Is that so? Why?" asked Kinney.

"Oh, they don't believe in interfering with any man's religion either."

"Well," said Kinney thoughtfully, pausing with the rolling-pin in his hand, "there 's such a thing as being *too* liberal, I suppose."

"The world 's tried the other thing a good while," said Bartley, with cynical amusement at Kinney's arrest.

It seemed to chill the flow of the good fellow's optimism, so that he assented with but lukewarm satisfaction.

"Well, that 's so too," and he made up the rest of his pies in silence.

"Well," he exclaimed at last, as if shaking him-

self out of an unpleasant reverie, "I guess we shall get along somehow. Do you like pork and beans?"

"Yes, I do," said Bartley.

"We're goin' to have 'em for dinner. You can hit beans any meal you drop in on us; beans twenty-one times a week, just like pie. Set 'em in to warm," he said, taking up a capacious earthen pot near the stove, and putting it into the oven. "I been pretty much everywheres, and I don't know as I found anything for a stand-by that come up to beans. I'm goin' to give 'em potatoes and cabbage to-day—kind of a boiled-dinner day—but you'll see there ain't one in ten'll touch 'em to what there will these old residenters. Potatoes and cabbage'll do for a kind of a delicacy—sort of a side-dish—on-*tree*, you know; but give 'em beans for a steady diet. Why, off there in Chili, even, the people regularly live on beans—not exactly like ours—broad and flat—but they're beans. Wa'n't there some those ancients—old Horace, or Virgil, may be—rung in something about beans in some their poems?"

"I don't remember anything of the kind," said Bartley languidly.

"Well, I don't know as *I* can. I just have a dim recollection of language thrown out at the object—as old Matthew Arnold says. But it might have been something in Emerson."

Bartley laughed.

"I didn't suppose you were such a reader, Kinney."

"Oh, I nibble round wherever I can get a chance. Mostly in the newspapers, you know. I don't get any time for books, as a general rule. But there's pretty much everything in the papers. I should call beans a brain-food."

"I guess you call anything a brain-food that you happen to like, don't you, Kinney?"

"No, sir," said Kinney soberly; "but I like to see the philosophy of a thing when I get a chance. Now, there's tea, for example," he said, pointing to the great tin pot on the stove.

"Coffee, you mean," said Bartley.

"No, sir, I mean tea. That's tea; and I give it to 'em three times a day, good and strong—molasses in it, and no milk. That's a brain-food, if ever there was one. Sets 'em up right on end every time. Clears their heads and keeps the cold out."

"I should think you were running a seminary for young ladies, instead of a logging-camp," said Bartley.

"No, but look at it: I'm in earnest about tea. You look at the tea-drinkers and the coffee-drinkers all the world over! Look at them in our own country! All the Northern people and all the go-a-head people drink tea. The Pennsylvanians and the Southerners drink coffee. Why, our New England folks don't even know how to *make* coffee

so it's fit to drink! And it's just so all over Europe. The Russians drink tea, and they'd e't up those coffee-drinking Turks long ago, if the tea-drinkin' English hadn't kept 'em from it. Go anywheres you like in the North, and you find 'em drinkin' tea. The Swedes and Norwegians in Aroostook County drink it; and they drink it at home."

"Well, what do you think of the French and Germans? They drink coffee, and they're pretty smart, active people too."

"French and Germans drink coffee?"

"Yes."

Kinney stopped short in his heated career of generalisation, and scratched his shaggy head.

"Well," he said finally, "I guess they're a kind of a missing link, as old Darwin says." He joined Bartley in his laugh cordially, and looked up at the round clock nailed to a log. "It's about time I set my tables, anyway. Well," he asked, apparently to keep the conversation from flagging while he went about this work, "how is the good old *Free Press* getting along?"

"It's going to get along without me from this out," said Bartley. "This is my last week in Equity."

"No!" retorted Kinney in tremendous astonishment.

"Yes: I'm off at the end of the week. Squire

Gaylord takes the paper back for the committee, and I suppose Henry Bird will run it for a while: or perhaps they 'll stop it altogether. It 's been a losing business for the committee."

"Why, I thought you 'd bought it of 'em."

"Well, that 's what I expected to do; but the office hasn't made any money. All that I've saved is in my colt and cutter."

"That sorrel?"

Bartley nodded. "I 'm going away about as poor as I came. I couldn't go much poorer."

"Well!" said Kinney, in the exhaustion of adequate language. He went on laying the plates and knives and forks in silence. These were of undisguised steel; the dishes and the drinking-mugs were of that dense and heavy make which the keepers of cheap restaurants use to protect themselves against breakage, and which their servants chip to the quick at every edge. Kinney laid bread and crackers by each plate; and on each he placed a vast slab of cold corned beef. Then he lifted the lid of the pot in which the cabbage and potatoes were boiling together, and pricked them with a fork. He dished up the beans in a succession of deep tins, and set them at intervals along the tables, and began to talk again.

"Well, now, I 'm sorry. I'd just begun to feel

real well acquainted with you. Tell you the truth, I didn't take much of a fancy to you first off."

"Is that so?" asked Bartley, not much disturbed by the confession.

"Yes, sir. Well, come to boil it down," said Kinney, with the frankness of an analytical mind that disdains to spare itself in the pursuit of truth, "I didn't like your good clothes. I don't suppose I ever had a suit of clothes to fit me. Feel kind of ashamed, you know, when I go into the store, and take the first thing the Jew wants to put off on to me. Now, I suppose you go to Macullar and Parker's in Boston, and you get what *you* want."

"No; I have my measure at a tailor's," said Bartley, with ill-concealed pride in the fact.

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Kinney. "Well!" he said, as if he might as well swallow this pill too while he was about it. "Well, what's the use? I never was the figure for clothes, anyway. Long, gangling boy to start with, and a lean, stoop-shouldered man. I found out some time ago that a fellow wa'n't necessarily a bad fellow because he had money, or a good fellow because he hadn't. But I hadn't quite got over hating a man because he had style. Well, I suppose it was a kind of a *survival*, as old Tylor calls it. But I tell you, I sniffed round you a good while before I made up my mind to swallow you. And that turn-out of yours,

it kind of staggered me, after I got over the clothes. Why, it wa'n't so much the colt—any man likes to ride after a sorrel colt; and it wa'n't so much the cutter: it was the red linin' with pinked edges that you had to your robe; and it was the red ribbon that you had tied round the waist of your whip. When I see that ribbon on that whip, dumn you, I wanted to kill you." Bartley broke out into a laugh, but Kinney went on soberly. "But, thinks I to myself: 'Here! Now you stop right here! You wait! You give the fellow a chance for his life. Let him have a chance to show whether that whip-ribbon goes all through him first. If it does, kill him cheerfully; but give him a chance, *first*.' Well, sir, I gave you the chance, and you showed that you deserved it. I guess you taught me a lesson. When I see you at work, pegging away hard at something or other, every time I went into your office, up and coming with everybody, and just as ready to pass the time of day with me as the biggest bug in town, thinks I: 'You'd have made a great mistake to kill that fellow, Kinney!' And I just made up my mind to like you."

"Thanks," said Bartley, with ironical gratitude.

Kinney did not speak at once. He whistled thoughtfully through his teeth, and then he said—

"I'll tell you what: If you're going away *very* poor, I know a wealthy chap you can raise a loan out of."

Bartley thought seriously for a silent moment.

"If your friend offers me twenty dollars, I'm not too well dressed to take it."

"All right," said Kinney. He now dished up the cabbage and potatoes, and throwing a fresh handful of tea into the pot, and filling it up with water, he took down a tin horn, with which he went to the door and sounded a long stertorous note.

X.

"GUESS it was the clothes again," said Kinney, as he began to wash his tins and dishes after the dinner was over, and the men had gone back to their work. "I could see 'em eyein' you over when they first came in, and I could see that they didn't exactly like the looks of 'em. It would wear off in time, but it *takes* time for it to wear off; and it had to go pretty rusty for a start-off. Well, I don't know as it makes much difference to you, does it?"

"Oh, I thought we got along very well," said Bartley, with a careless yawn. "There wasn't much chance to get acquainted." Some of the loggers were as handsome and well-made as he, and were of as good origin and traditions, though he had some advantages of training. But his two-button cutaway, his well-fitting trousers, his scarf with a pin in it, had been too much for these young fellows in their long 'stoga boots and flannel shirts. They looked at him askance, and despatched their meal with more than their wonted swiftness, and were off again into the woods without any demonstrations of satisfaction in Bartley's presence.

He had perceived their grudge; for he had felt it in his time. But it did not displease him; he had none of the pain with which Kinney, who had so long bragged of him to the loggers, saw that his guest was a failure.

"I guess they'll come out all right in the end," he said. In this warm atmosphere, after the gross and heavy dinner he had eaten, he yawned again and again. He folded his overcoat into a pillow for his bench and lay down, and lazily watched Kinney about his work. Presently he saw Kinney seated on a block of wood beside the stove, with his elbow propped in one hand, and holding a magazine, out of which he was reading; he wore spectacles, which gave him a fresh and interesting touch of grotesqueness. Bartley found that an empty barrel had been placed on each side of him, evidently to keep him from rolling off his bench.

"Hello!' he said. "Much obliged to you, Kinney, I haven't been taken such good care of since I can remember. Been asleep, haven't I?"

"About an hour," said Kinney, with a glance at the clock, and ignoring his agency in Bartley's comfort.

"Food for the brain!" said Bartley, sitting up. "I should think so. I've dreamt a perfect New American Cyclopædia, and a pronouncing gazetteer thrown in."

"Is that so?" said Kinney, as if pleased with the suggestive character of his cookery, now established by eminent experiment.

Bartley yawned a yawn of satisfied sleepiness, and rubbed his hand over his face.

"I suppose," he said, "if I'm going to write anything about Camp Kinney, I had better see all there is to see."

"Well, yes, I presume you had," said Kinney. "We'll go over to where they're cuttin' pretty soon, and you can see all there is in an hour. But I presume you'll want to see it so as to ring in some description, hey? Well, that's all right. But what you going to do with it when you've done it, now you're out of the *Free Press?*"

"Oh, I shouldn't have printed it in the *Free Press*, anyway. Coals to Newcastle, you know. I'll tell you what I think I'll do, Kinney: I'll get my outlines, and then you post me with a lot of facts —queer characters, accidents, romantic incidents, snowings-up, threatened starvation, adventures with wild animals—and I can make something worth while; get out two or three columns, so they can print it in their Sunday edition. And then I'll take it up to Boston with me, and seek my fortune with it."

"Well, sir, I'll do it," said Kinney, fired with the poetry of the idea. "I'll post you! Dumn 'f I

don't wish *I* could write! Well, I *did* use to scribble once for an agricultural paper; but I don't call that writin'. I've set down, well, I guess as much as sixty times, to try to write out what I know about loggin'—"

"Hold on!" cried Bartley, whipping out his note-book. "That's first-rate. That'll do for the first line in the head: *What I know about Logging:* large caps. Well!"

Kinney shut his magazine, and took his knee between his hands, screwing his eyes almost shut to sharpen his recollection. He poured forth a stream of reminiscence, mingled observation, and personal experience. Bartley followed him with his pencil, jotting down points, striking in sub-head lines, and now and then interrupting him with cries of "Good!" "Capital!" "It's a perfect mine—it's a mint! By Jove!" he exclaimed, "I'll make *six* columns of this! I'll offer it to one of the magazines, and it'll come out illustrated! Go on, Kinney."

"Hark!" said Kinney, craning his neck forward to listen. "I thought I heard sleigh-bells. But I guess it wa'n't. Well, sir, as I was sayin', they fetched that fellow into camp with both feet frozen to the knees—dumn 'f it *wa'n't* bells!"

He unlimbered himself, and hurried to the door at the other end of the cabin, which he opened, letting

in a clear block of the afternoon sunshine, and a gush of sleigh-bell music, shot with men's voices, and the cries and laughter of women.

"Well, sir," said Kinney, coming back and making haste to roll down his sleeves and put on his coat. "*Here's* a nuisance! A whole party of folks—two sleigh-loads—right *on* us. I don't know who they *be*, or where they're from. But I know where I wish they *was*. Well, of course, it's natural they should want to see a loggin'-camp," added Kinney, taking himself to task for his inhospitable mind, "and there ain't any harm in it. But I wish they'd give a fellow a *little* notice!"

The voices and bells drew nearer, but Kinney seemed resolved to observe the decorum of not going to the door till some one knocked.

"Kinney! Kinney! Hello, Kinney!" shouted a man's voice, as the bells hushed before the door, and broke into a musical clash when one of the horses tossed his head.

"Well, sir," said Kinney, rising, "I guess it's old Willett himself. He's the owner; lives up to Portland; and been threatening to come down here all winter, with a party of friends. You just stay still," he added; and he paid himself the deference which every true American owes himself in his dealings with his employer: he went to the door very deliberately, and made no haste on account of the

repeated cries of "Kinney! Kinney!" in which others of the party outside now joined.

When he opened the door again, the first voice saluted him with a roar of laughter.

"Why, Kinney, I began to think you were dead!"

"No, sir," Bartley heard Kinney reply, "it takes more to kill me than you suppose." But now he stepped outside, and the talk became unintelligible.

Finally Bartley heard what was imaginably Mr. Willett's voice saying, "Well, let's go in and have a look at it now;" and with much outcry and laughter the ladies were invisibly helped to dismount, and presently the whole party came stamping and rustling in.

Bartley's blood tingled. He liked this, and he stood quite self-possessed, with his thumbs in his waistcoat-pockets and his elbows dropped, while Mr. Willett advanced in a friendly way.

"Ah, Mr. Hubbard! Kinney told us you were in here, and asked me to introduce myself while he looked after the horses. My name's Willett. These are my daughters; this is Mrs. Macallister, of Montreal; Mrs. Witherby, of Boston; Miss Witherby, and Mr. Witherby. *You* ought to know each other; Mr. Hubbard is the editor of the Equity *Free Press;* Mr. Witherby of the *Boston Events*, Mr. Hubbard. Oh, and *Mr.* Macallister."

Bartley bowed to the Willett and Witherby ladies,

and shook hands with Mr. Witherby, a large, solemn man, with a purse-mouth and tight rings of white hair, who treated him with the pomp inevitable to the owner of a city newspaper in meeting a country editor.

At the mention of his name, Mr. Macallister, a slight little straight man, in a long ulster and a seal-skin cap, tiddled farcically forward on his toes, and giving Bartley his hand, said, "Ah, haow d'e-do? *haow* d'e-do?"

Mrs. Macallister fixed upon him the eye of the flirt who knows her man. She was of the dark-eyed English type; her eyes were very large and full, and her smooth black hair was drawn flatly backward, and fastened in a knot just under her dashing fur cap. She wore a fur sack, and she was equipped against the cold as exquisitely as her Southern sisters defend themselves from the summer. Bits of warm colour, in ribbon and scarf, flashed out here and there; when she flung open her sack, she showed herself much more lavishly buttoned and bugled and bangled than the Americans. She sat down on the moveable bench which Bartley had vacated, and crossed her feet, very small and saucy, even in their arctics,[1] on a stick of firewood, and cast up her neat profile, and rapidly made eyes at every part of the

[1] Heavy, flannel-lined, indiarubber overshoes.

interior. "Why, it's delicious, you know. I never saw anything so comfortable. I want to spend the rest of me life here, you know." She spoke very far down in her throat, and with a rising inflection in each sentence. "I'm going to have a quarrel with you, Mr. Willett, for not telling me what a delightful surprise you had for us here. Oh, but I'd no idea of it, I assure you!"

"Well, I'm glad you like it, Mrs. Macallister," said Mr. Willett, with the clumsiness of American middle-age when summoned to say something gallant. "If I'd told you what a surprise I had for you, it wouldn't have been one."

"Oh, it's no good your trying to get out of it *that* way," retorted the beauty. "There he comes, now! I'm really in love with him, you know," she said, as Kinney opened the door and came hulking forward.

Nobody said anything at once, but Bartley laughed finally and ventured—

"Well, I'll propose for you to Kinney."

"Oh, I daresay!" cried the beauty, with a lively effect of wit. "Mr. Kinney, I have fallen in love with your camp, d'ye know?" she added, as Kinney drew near, "and I'm beggin' Mr. Willett to let me come and live here among you."

"Well, ma'am," said Kinney, a little abashed at this proposition, "you couldn't do a better thing for your health, I *guess*."

The proprietor of the *Boston Events* turned about, and began to look over the arrangements of the interior; the other ladies went with him, conversing in low tones. "These must be the places where the men sleep," they said, gazing at the bunks.

"We must get Kinney to explain things to us," said Mr. Willett a little restlessly.

Mrs. Macallister jumped briskly to her feet.

"Oh yes, do, Mr. Willett, make him explain everything! I 've been tryin' to coax it out of him, but he 's *such* a tease!"

Kinney looked very sheepish in this character, and Mrs. Macallister hooked Bartley to her side for the tour of the interior. "I can't let you away from me, Mr. Hubbard; your friend 's so satirical, I 'm afraid of him. Only fancy, Mr. Willett! he 's been talkin' to *me* about brain-foods! I know he 's makin' fun of me; and it isn't kind, is it, Mr. Hubbard?"

She did not give the least notice to the things that the others looked at, or to Kinney's modest lecture upon the manners and customs of the loggers. She kept a little apart with Bartley, and plied him with bravadoes, with pouts, with little cries of suspense. In the midst of this he heard Mr. Willett saying, "You ought to get some one to come and write about this for your paper, Witherby." But Mrs. Macallister was also saying something, with a significant turn of her floating eyes, and the thing

that concerned Bartley, if he were to make his way among the newspapers in Boston, slipped from his grasp like the idea which we try to seize in a dream. She made sure of him for the drive to the place which they visited to see the men felling the trees, by inviting him to a seat at her side in the sleigh; this crowded the others, but she insisted and they all gave way, as people must to the caprices of a pretty woman. Her coquetries united British wilfulness to American nonchalance, and seemed to have been graduated to the appreciation of garrison and St. Lawrence River steamboat and watering-place society. The Willett ladies had already found it necessary to explain to the Witherby ladies that they had met her the summer before at the sea-side, and that she had stopped at Portland on her way to England; they did not know her very well, but some friends of theirs did; and their father had asked her to come with them to the camp. They added that the Canadian ladies seemed to expect the gentlemen to be a great deal more attentive than ours were. They had known as little what to do with Mr. Macallister's small-talk and compliments as his wife's audacities, but they did not view Bartley's responsiveness with pleasure. If Mrs. Macallister's arts were not subtle, as Bartley even in the intoxication of her preference could not keep from seeing, still, in his mood, it was consoling to be singled out

by her: it meant that even in a logging-camp he was recognisable by any person of fashion as a good-looking, well-dressed man of the world. It embittered him the more against Marcia, while, in some sort, it vindicated him to himself.

The early winter sunset was beginning to tinge the snow with crimson, when the party started back to camp, where Kinney was to give them supper; he had it greatly on his conscience that they should have a good time, and he promoted it as far as hot mince-pie and newly fried dough-nuts would go. He also opened a few canned goods, as he called some very exclusive sardines and peaches, and he made an entirely fresh pot of tea, and a pan of soda-biscuit. Mrs. Macallister made remarks across her plate which were for Bartley alone; and Kinney, who was seriously waiting upon his guests, refused to respond to Bartley's joking reference to himself of some questions and comments of hers.

After supper, when the loggers had withdrawn to the other end of the long hut, she called out to Kinney—

"Oh, *do* tell them to smoke: we shall not mind it at all, I assure you. Can't some of them do something? Sing or dance?"

Kinney unbent a little at this.

"There's a first-class clog-dancer among them;

but he 's a little stuck up, and I don't know as you could get him to dance," he said in a low tone.

"What a bloated aristocrat!" cried the lady. "Then the only thing is for us to dance first. Can they play?"

"One of 'em can whistle like a bird—he can whistle like a whole band," answered Kinney, warming. "And of course the Kanucks can fiddle."

"And what are Kanucks? Is *that* what you call us Canadians?"

"Well, ma'am, it ain't quite the thing to do," said Kinney penitently.

"It isn't at *all* the thing to do! Which are the Kanucks?"

She rose, and went forward with Kinney, in her spoiled way, and addressed a swarthy, gleaming-eyed young logger in French. He answered with a smile that showed all his white teeth, and turned to one of his comrades; then the two rose, and got violins out of the bunks, and came forward. Others of their race joined them, but the Yankees hung gloomily back: they clearly did not like these liberties, this patronage.

"I shall have your clog-dancer on his feet yet, Mr. Kinney," said Mrs. Macallister, as she came back to her place.

The Canadians began to play and sing those gay, gay airs of old France which they have kept unsad-

dened through all the dark events that have changed the popular mood of the mother-country; they have matched words to them in celebration of their life on the great rivers and in the vast forests of the North, and in these blithe barcaroles and hunting-songs breathes the joyous spirit of a France that knows neither doubt nor care; France untouched by Revolution or Napoleonic wars; some of the airs still keep the very words that came over seas with them two hundred years ago. The transition to the dance was quick and inevitable; a dozen slim young fellows were gliding about behind the players, pounding the hard earthen floor, and singing in time.

"Oh, come, come!" cried the beauty, rising and stamping impatiently with her little foot, "suppose we dance too."

She pulled Bartley forward by the hand; her husband followed with the taller Miss Willett; two of the Canadians, at the instance of Mrs. Macallister, came forward and politely asked the honour of the other young ladies' hands in the dance; their temper was infectious, and the cotillon was in full life before their parents had time to wonder at their consent. Mrs. Macallister could sing some of the Canadian songs; her voice, clear and fresh, rang through those of the men, while in at the window, thrown open for air, came the wild cries of the forest:

the wail of a catamount, and the solemn hooting of a distant owl.

"Isn't it jolly good fun?" she demanded, when the figure was finished; and now Kinney went up to the first-class clog-dancer, and prevailed with him to show his skill. He seemed to consent on condition that the whistler should furnish the music; he came forward with a bashful hauteur, bridling stiffly like a girl, and struck into the laborious and monotonous jig which is, perhaps, our national dance. He was exquisitely shaped, and as he danced, he suppled more and more, while the whistler warbled a wilder and swifter strain, and kept time with his hands. There was something that stirred the blood in the fury of the strain and dance. When it was done, Mrs. Macallister caught off her cap and ran round among the spectators to make them pay; she excused no one, and she gave the money to Kinney, telling him to get his loggers something to keep the cold out.

"I should say whisky, if I were in the Canadian bush," she suggested.

"Well, *I* guess we sha'n't say anything of that sort in *this* camp," said Kinney.

She turned upon Bartley: "I know Mr. Hubbard is dying to do something. Do something, Mr. Hubbard!" Bartley looked up in surprise at this interpretation of his tacit wish to distinguish himself

before her. "Come, sing us some of your student songs."

Bartley's vanity had confided the fact of his college training to her, and he was really thinking just then that he would like to give them a serio-comic song, for which he had been famous with his class. He borrowed the violin of a Kanuck, and, sitting down, strummed upon it banjo-wise. The song was one of those which is partly spoken and acted; he really did it very well; but the Willett and Witherby ladies did not seem to understand it quite; and the gentlemen looked as if they thought this very undignified business for an educated American.

Mrs. Macallister feigned a yawn, and put up her hand to hide it. "*Oh*, what a styupid song!" she said. She sprang to her feet, and began to put on her wraps. The others were glad of this signa to go, and followed her example. "Good-bye!" she cried, giving her hand to Kinney. "*I* don't think your ideas are ridiculous. I think there 's no end of good sense in them, I assure you. I hope you won't leave off that regard for the brain in your cooking. Good-bye!" She waved her hand to the Americans, and then to the Kanucks, as she passed out between their respectfully parted ranks. "Adieu, messieurs!" She merely nodded to Bartley; the others parted from him coldly, as he fancied, and

it seemed to him that he had been made responsible for that woman's coquetries, when he was conscious, all the time, of having forborne even to meet them half-way. But this was not so much to his credit as he imagined. The flirt can only practise her audacities safely by grace of those upon whom she uses them, and if men really met them half-way there could be no such thing as flirting.

XI.

THE loggers pulled off their boots and got into their bunks, where some of them lay and smoked, while others fell asleep directly.

Bartley made some indirect approaches to Kinney for sympathy in the snub which he had received, and which rankled in his mind with unabated keenness.

But Kinney did not respond.

"Your bed's ready," he said. "You can turn in whenever you like."

"What's the matter?" asked Bartley.

"Nothing's the matter, if you say so," answered Kinney, going about some preparations for the morning's breakfast.

Bartley looked at his resentful back. He saw that he was hurt, and he surmised that Kinney suspected him of making fun of his eccentricities to Mrs. Macallister. He *had* laughed at Kinney, and tried to amuse her with him; but he could not have made this appear as harmless as it was. He rose from the bench on which he had been sitting, and shut with a click the penknife with which he had been cutting a pattern on its edge.

"I shall have to say good-night to you, I believe," he said, going to the peg on which Kinney had hung his hat and overcoat. He had them on, and was buttoning the coat in an angry tremor before Kinney looked up and realised what his guest was about.

"Why, what — why, where — you goin'?" he faltered in dismay.

"To Equity," said Bartley, feeling in his coat-pockets for his gloves, and drawing them on, without looking at Kinney, whose great hands were in a pan of dough.

"Why—why—no, you ain't!" he protested, with a revulsion of feeling that swept away all his resentment, and left him nothing but remorse for his inhospitality.

"No?" said Bartley, putting up the collar of the first ulster worn by a native in that region.

"Why, look here!" cried Kinney, pulling his hands out of the dough, and making a fruitless effort to cleanse them upon each other. "I don't want you to go this way."

"Don't you? I'm sorry to disoblige you; but I'm going," said Bartley.

Kinney tried to laugh.

"Why, Hubbard—why, Bartley—why, Bart!" he exclaimed. "What's the matter with you? I ain't mad!"

"You have an unfortunate manner, then. Good-night." He strode out between the bunks, full of snoring loggers. Kinney hurried after him, imploring and protesting in a low voice, trying to get before him, and longing to lay his floury paws upon him and detain him by main force, but, even in his distress, respecting Bartley's overcoat too much to touch it.

He followed him out into the freezing air in his shirt-sleeves, and besought him not to be such a fool. "It makes me feel like the devil!" he exclaimed pitifully. "You come back, now, half a minute, and I'll make it all right with you. I know I can; you're a gentleman; and you'll understand. *Do* come back! I shall never get over it, if you don't!"

"I'm sorry," said Bartley, "but I'm not going back. Good-night."

"Oh, good Lordy!" lamented Kinney. "What am I going to do? Why, man! it's a good three mile and more to Equity, and the woods is full of catamounts. I tell ye 'tain't safe for ye." He kept following Bartley down the path to the road.

"I'll risk it," said Bartley.

Kinney had left the door of the camp open, and the yells and curses of the awakened sleepers recalled him to himself.

"Well, well! If you will *go*," he groaned in despair, "here's that money." He plunged his

doughy hand into his pocket, and pulled out a roll of bills. "Here it is. I hain't time to count it; but it 'll be all right, anyhow."

Bartley did not even turn his head to look round at him.

"Keep your money!" he said, as he plunged forward through the snow. "I wouldn't touch a cent of it to save your life."

"All right," said Kinney, in hapless contrition, and he returned to shut himself in with the reproaches of the loggers and the upbraiding of his own heart.

Bartley dashed along the road in a fury that kept him unconscious of the intense cold; and he passed half the night, when he was once more in his own room, packing his effects against his departure next day. When all was done, he went to bed, half wishing that he might never rise from it again. It was not that he cared for Kinney; that fool's sulking was only the climax of a long series of injuries of which he was the victim at the hands of a hypercritical omnipotence.

Despite his conviction that it was useless to struggle longer against such injustice, he lived through the night, and came down late to breakfast, which he found stale, and without the compensating advantage of finding himself alone at the table. Some ladies had lingered there to clear up on the

best authority the distracting rumours concerning him which they had heard the day before. Was it true that he had intended to spend the rest of the winter in logging? and *was* it true that he was going to give up the *Free Press?* and was it *true* that Henry Bird was going to be the editor? Bartley gave a sarcastic confirmation to all these reports, and went out to the printing-office to gather up some things of his. He found Henry Bird there, looking pale and sick, but at work, and seemingly in authority. This was what Bartley had always intended when he should go out, but he did not like it, and he resented some small changes that had already been made in the editor's room, in tacit recognition of his purpose not to occupy it again.

Bird greeted him stiffly; the printer girls briefly nodded to him, suppressing some little hysterical titters, and tacitly let him feel that he was no longer master there. While he was in the composing-room Hannah Morrison came in, apparently from some errand outside, and, catching sight of him, stared, and pertly passed him in silence. On his inkstand he found a letter from Squire Gaylord, briefly auditing his last account, and enclosing the balance due him. From this the old lawyer, with the careful smallness of a village business man, had deducted various little sums for things which

Bartley had never expected to pay for. With a like thriftiness the landlord, when Bartley asked for his bill, had charged certain items that had not appeared in the bills before. Bartley felt that the charges were trumped up; but he was powerless to dispute them; besides, he hoped to sell the landlord his colt and cutter, and he did not care to prejudice that matter. Some bills from storekeepers, which he thought he had paid, were handed to him by the landlord, and each of the churches had sent in a little account for pew-rent for the past eighteen months: he had always believed himself dead-headed[1] at church. He outlawed the latter by tearing them to pieces in the landlord's presence, and dropping the fragments into a spittoon. It seemed to him that every soul in Equity was making a clutch at the rapidly diminishing sum of money which Squire Gaylord had enclosed to him, and which was all he had in the world. On the other hand, his popularity in the village seemed to have vanished over-night. He had sometimes fancied a general and rebellious grief when it should become known that he was going away; but instead there was an acquiescence amounting to airiness.

He wondered if anything about his affairs with

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1 "Dead-heads"—Persons who visit theatres, travel on railroads, etc., without charge, such as reporters.

Henry Bird and Hannah Morrison had leaked out. But he did not care. He only wished to shake the snow of Equity off his feet as soon as possible.

After dinner, when the boarders had gone out, and the loafers had not yet gathered in, he offered the landlord his colt and cutter. Bartley knew that the landlord wanted the colt; but now the latter said, "I don't know as I care to buy any horses, right in the winter this way."

"All right," answered Bartley. "Just have the colt put into the cutter."

Andy Morrison brought it round. The boy looked at Bartley's set face with a sort of awe-stricken affection; his adoration for the young man survived all that he had heard said against him at home during the series of family quarrels that had ensued upon his father's interview with him; he longed to testify, somehow, his unabated loyalty, but he could not think of anything to do, much less to say.

Bartley pitched his valise into the cutter, and then, as Andy left the horse's head to give him a hand with his trunk, offered him a dollar.

"I don't want anything," said the boy, shyly refusing the money out of pure affection.

But Bartley mistook his motive, and thought it sulky resentment.

"Oh, very well," he said. "Take hold."

The landlord came out.

"Hold on a minute," he said. "Where you goin' to take the cars?"

"At the Junction," answered Bartley. "I know a man there that will buy the colt. What is it you want?"

The landlord stepped back a few paces, and surveyed the establishment.

"I should like to ride after that hoss," he said, "if you ain't in any great of a hurry."

"Get in," said Bartley, and the landlord took the reins.

From time to time, as he drove, he rose up and looked over the dash-board to study the gait of the horse.

"I've noticed he strikes some, when he first comes out in the spring."

"Yes," Bartley assented.

"Pulls consid'able."

"He pulls."

The landlord rose again and scrutinised the horse's legs.

"I don't know as I ever noticed 't he'd capped his hock before."

"Didn't you?"

"Done it kickin' nights, I guess."

"I guess so."

The landlord drew the whip lightly across the

colt's rear; he shrank together, and made a little spring forward, but behaved perfectly well.

"I don't know as I should always be sure he wouldn't kick in the day-time."

"No," said Bartley, "you never can be sure of anything."

They drove along in silence. At last the landlord said—

"Well, he ain't so fast as I *supposed*."

"He's not so fast a horse as some," answered Bartley.

The landlord leaned over sidewise for an inspection of the colt's action forward.

"Hain't never thought he had a splint on that forward off leg?"

"A splint? Perhaps he has a splint."

They returned to the hotel and both alighted.

"Skittish devil," remarked the landlord, as the colt quivered under the hand he laid upon him.

"He's skittish," said Bartley.

The landlord retired as far back as the door, and regarded the colt critically.

"Well, I s'pose you've always used him too well ever to winded him, but dumn'f he don't *blow* like it."

"Look here, Simpson," said Bartley, very quietly. "You know this horse as well as I do, and you know there isn't an out about him. You want to buy

him because you always have. Now make me an offer."

"Well," groaned the landlord, "what 'll you take for the whole rig, just as it stands—colt, cutter, leathers, and robe?"

"Two hundred dollars," promptly replied Bartley.

"I 'll give ye seventy-five," returned the landlord with equal promptness.

"Andy, take hold of the end of that trunk, will you?"

The landlord allowed them to put the trunk into the cutter. Bartley got in too, and, shifting the baggage to one side, folded the robe around him from his middle down and took his seat.

"This colt can road you right along all day inside of five minutes, and he can trot inside of two-thirty every time; and you know it as well as I do."

"Well," said the landlord, "make it an even hundred."

Bartley leaned forward and gathered up the reins.

"Let go his head, Andy," he quietly commanded.

"Make it one and a quarter," cried the landlord, not seeing that his chance was past. "What do you say?"

What Bartley said, as he touched the colt with the whip, the landlord never knew. He stood watching the cutter's swift disappearance up the road, in a sort of stupid expectation of its return.

When he realised that Bartley's departure was final, he said under his breath: "Sold, ye dumned old fool, and serve ye right," and went in-doors with a feeling of admiration for colt and man that bordered on reverence.

XII.

THIS last drop of the local meanness filled Bartley's bitter cup. As he passed the house at the end of the street he seemed to drain it all. He knew that the old lawyer was there sitting by the office-stove, drawing his hand across his chin, and Bartley hoped that he was still as miserable as he had looked when he last saw him; but he did not know that by the window in the house which he would not even look at, Marcia sat self-prisoned in her room, with her eyes upon the road, famishing for the thousandth part of a chance to see him pass. She saw him now for the instant of his coming and going. With eyes trained to take in every point, she saw the preparation which seemed like final departure, and with a gasp of "Bartley!" as if she were trying to call after him, she sank back into her chair and shut her eyes.

He drove on, plunging into the deep hollow beyond the house, and keeping for several miles the road they had taken on that Sunday together; but he did not make the turn that brought them back to the village again. The pale sunset was slanting

over the snow when he reached the Junction, for he had slackened his colt's pace after he had put ten miles behind him, not choosing to reach a prospective purchaser with his horse all blown and bathed with sweat. He wished to be able to say: "Look at him! He 's come fifteen miles since three o'clock, and he 's as keen as when he started."

This was true, when, having left his baggage at the Junction, he drove another mile into the country to see the farmer of the gentleman who had his summer-house here, and who had once bantered Bartley to sell him his colt. The farmer was away, and would not be at home till the up-train from Boston was in. Bartley looked at his watch, and saw that to wait would lose him the six o'clock down-train. There would be no other till eleven o'clock. But it was worth while: the gentleman had said, "When you want the money for that colt, bring him over any time; my farmer will have it ready for you." He waited for the up-train, but when the farmer arrived, he was full of all sorts of scruples and reluctances. He said he should not like to buy it till he had heard from Mr. Farnham; he ended by offering Bartley eighty dollars for the colt on his own account; he did not want the cutter.

"You write to Mr. Farnham," said Bartley, "that you tried that plan with me, and it wouldn't work; he 's lost the colt."

He made this brave show of indifference, but he was disheartened, and having carried the farmer home from the Junction for the convenience of talking over the trade with him, he drove back again through the early night-fall in sullen desperation.

The weather had softened and was threatening rain or snow; the dark was closing in spiritlessly; the colt, shortening from a trot into a short, springy jolt, dropped into a walk at last as if he were tired, and gave Bartley time enough on his way back to the Junction for reflection upon the disaster into which his life had fallen. These passages of utter despair are commoner to the young than they are to those whom years have experienced in the impermanence of any fate, good, bad, or indifferent, unless, perhaps, the latter may seem rather constant. Taken in reference to all that had been ten days ago, the present ruin was incredible, and had nothing reasonable in proof of its existence. Then he was prosperously placed, and in the way to better himself indefinitely. Now, he was here in the dark, with fifteen dollars in his pocket, and an unsaleable horse on his hands; outcast, deserted, homeless, hopeless: and by whose fault? He owned even then that he had committed some follies; but in his sense of Marcia's all-giving love he had risen for once in his life to a conception of self-devotion, and

in taking herself from him as she did, she had taken from him the highest incentive he had ever known, and had checked him in his first feeble impulse to do and be all in all for another. It was she who had ruined him.

As he jumped out of the cutter at the Junction, the station-master stopped with a cluster of parti-coloured signal-lanterns in his hand and cast their light over the sorrel.

"Nice colt you got there."

"Yes," said Bartley, blanketing the horse; "do you know anybody who wants to buy?"

"Whose is he?" asked the man.

"He's mine!" shouted Bartley. "Do you think I stole him?"

"*I* don't know where you got him," said the man, walking off, and making a soft play of red and green lights on the snow beyond the narrow platform.

Bartley went into the great ugly barn of a station, trembling, and sat down in one of the gouged and whittled arm-chairs near the stove. A pomp of time-tables and luminous advertisements of Western railroads and their land-grants decorated the wooden walls of the gentlemen's waiting-room, which had been sanded to keep the gentlemen from writing and sketching upon them. This was the more judicious, because the ladies' room, in the absence of tourist travel, was locked in winter, and they were obliged

to share the gentlemen's. In summer, the Junction was a busy place, but after the snow fell, and until the snow thawed, it was a desolation relieved only by the arrival of the sparsely-peopled through trains from the north and east, and by such local travellers as wished to take trains not stopping at their own stations. These broke in upon the solitude of the joint station-master and baggage-man and switch-tender with just sufficient frequency to keep him in a state of uncharitable irritation and unrest. To-night Bartley was the sole intruder, and he sat by the stove wrapped in a cloud of rebellious memories, when one side of a colloquy without made itself heard.

"What?"

Some question was repeated.

"No; it went down half an hour ago."

An inaudible question followed.

"Next down-train at eleven."

There was now a faintly audible lament or appeal.

"Guess you'll have to come earlier next time. Most folks doos that wants to take it."

Bartley now heard the despairing moan of a woman; he had already divined the sex of the futile questioner whom the station-master was bullying; but he had divined it without compassion, and if he had not himself been a sufferer from the man's insolence he might even have felt a ferocious satisfaction

in it. In a word, he was at his lowest and worst when the door opened and the woman came in, with a movement at once bewildered and daring, which gave him the impression of a despair as complete and final as his own. He doggedly kept his place; she did not seem to care for him, but in the uncertain light of the lamp above them she drew near the stove, and putting one hand to her pocket as if to find her handkerchief, she flung aside her veil with the other and showed her tear-stained face.

He was on his feet somehow.

"Marcia!"

"Oh! Bartley—"

He had seized her by the arm to make sure that she was there in verity of flesh and blood, and not by some trick of his own senses, as a cold chill running over him had made him afraid. At the touch their passion ignored all that they had made each other suffer; her head was on his breast, his embrace was round her; it was a moment of delirious bliss that intervened between the sorrows that had been and the reasons that must come.

"What—what are you doing here, Marcia?" he asked at last.

They sank on the benching that ran round the wall; he held her hands fast in one of his, and kept his other arm about her as they sat side by side.

"I don't know—I—" She seemed to rouse her-

self by an effort from her rapture. "I was going to see Nettie Spaulding. And I saw you driving past our house; and I thought you were coming here; and I couldn't bear—I couldn't bear to let you go away without telling you that I was wrong; and asking—asking you to forgive me. I thought you would do it—I thought you would know that I had behaved that way because I—I—cared so much for you. I thought—I was afraid you had gone on the other train—"

She trembled and sank in his embrace, from which she had lifted herself a little.

"How did you get here?" asked Bartley, as if willing to give himself all the proofs he could of the every-day reality of her presence.

"Andy Morrison brought me. Father sent him from the hotel. I didn't care what you would say to me. I wanted to tell you that I was wrong, and not let you go away feeling that—that—you were all to blame. I thought when I had done that, you might drive me away—or laugh at me, or anything you pleased, if only you would let me take back—"

"Yes," he answered dreamily. All that wicked hardness was breaking up within him; he felt it melting drop by drop in his heart. This poor love-tossed soul, this frantic, unguided, reckless girl, was an angel of mercy to him, and in her folly and

error a messenger of heavenly peace and hope. "I am a bad fellow, Marcia," he faltered. "You ought to know that. You did right to give me up. I made love to Hannah Morrison; I never promised to marry her, but I made her think that I was fond of her."

"I don't care for that," replied the girl. "I told you when we were first engaged that I would never think of anything that had gone before that; and then when I would not listen to a word from you, that day, I broke my promise."

"When I struck Henry Bird because he was jealous of me, I was as guilty as if I had killed him."

"If you had killed him, I was bound to you by my word. Your striking him was part of the same thing,—part of what I had promised I never would care for." A gush of tears came into his eyes, and she saw them. "Oh, poor Bartley! Poor Bartley!"

She took his head between her hands and pressed it hard against her heart, and then wrapped her arms tight about him, and softly bemoaned him.

They drew a little apart when the man came in with his lantern, and set it down to mend the fire. But as a railroad *employé* he was far too familiar with the love that vaunts itself on all railroad trains to feel that he was an intruder. He scarcely looked

at them, and went out when he had mended the fire, and left it purring.

"Where is Andy Morrison?" asked Bartley. "Has he gone back?"

"No; he is at the hotel over there. I told him to wait till I found out when the train went north."

"So you inquired when it went to Boston," said Bartley, with a touch of his old raillery. "Come," he added, taking her hand under his arm. He led her out of the room, to where his cutter stood outside. She was astonished to find the colt there.

"I wonder I didn't see it. But if I had, I should have thought that you had sold it and gone away; Andy told me you were coming here to sell the colt. When the man told me the express was gone, I knew you were on it."

They found the boy stolidly waiting for Marcia on the verandah of the hotel, stamping first upon one foot and then the other, and hugging himself in his great-coat as the coming snow-fall blew its first flakes in his face.

"Is that you, Andy?" asked Bartley.

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, without surprise at finding him with Marcia.

"Well, here! Just take hold of the colt's head a minute."

As the boy obeyed, Bartley threw the reins on the dash-board, and leaped out of the cutter, and went

within. He returned after a brief absence, followed by the landlord.

"Well, it ain't more 'n a mile 'n a half, if it's that. You just keep straight along this street, and take your first turn to the left, and you 're right at the house; it's the first house on the left-hand side."

"Thanks," returned Bartley. "Andy, you tell the Squire that you left Marcia with me, and I said I would see about her getting back. You needn't hurry."

"All right," said the boy, and he disappeared round the corner of the house to get his horse from the barn.

"Well, I'll be all ready by the time you 're here," said the landlord, still holding the hall-door ajar. "Luck *to* you!" he shouted, shutting it.

Marcia locked both her hands through Bartley's arm, and leaned her head on his shoulder. Neither spoke for some minutes; then he asked, "Marcia, do you know where you are?"

"With you," she answered, in a voice of utter peace.

"Do you know where we are going?" he asked, leaning over to kiss her cold, pure cheek.

"No," she answered in as perfect content as before. "We are going to get married."

He felt her grow tense in her clasp upon his arm,

and hold there rigidly for a moment, while the swift thoughts whirled through her mind. Then, as if the struggle had ended, she silently relaxed, and leaned more heavily against him.

"There's still time to go back, Marcia," he said, "if you wish. That turn to the right, yonder, will take us to Equity, and you can be at home in two hours." She quivered. "I'm a poor man,—I suppose you know that; I've only got fifteen dollars in the world, and the colt here. I know I can get on; I'm not afraid for myself; but if you would rather wait,—if you're not perfectly certain of yourself,—remember, it's going to be a struggle; we're going to have some hard times—"

"You forgive me?" she huskily asked, for all answer, without moving her head from where it lay.

"Yes, Marcia."

"Then—hurry."

The minister was an old man, and he seemed quite dazed at the suddenness of their demand for his services. But he gathered himself together, and contrived to make them man and wife, and to give them his marriage certificate.

"It seems as if there were something else," he said absently, as he handed the paper to Bartley.

"Perhaps it's this," said Bartley, giving him a five-dollar note in return.

"Ah, perhaps," he replied, in unabated perplexity.

He bade them serve God, and let them out into the snowy night, through which they drove back to the hotel.

The landlord had kindled a fire on the hearth of the Franklin stove in his parlour, and the blazing hickory snapped in electrical sympathy with the storm when they shut themselves into the bright room, and Bartley took Marcia fondly into his arms.

"Wife!"

"Husband!"

They sat down before the fire, hand in hand, and talked of the light things that swim to the top, and eddy round and round on the surface of our deepest moods. They made merry over the old minister's perturbation, which Bartley found endlessly amusing. Then he noticed that the dress Marcia had on was the one she had worn to the sociable in Lower Equity, and she said, Yes, she had put it on because he once said he liked it. He asked her when, and she said, Oh, she knew; but if he could not remember, she was not going to tell him. Then she wanted to know if he recognised her by the dress before she lifted her veil in the station.

"No," he said, with a teasing laugh. "I wasn't thinking of you."

"Oh, Bartley!" she joyfully reproached him. "You must have been!"

"Yes, I was! I was so mad at you, that I was

glad to have that brute of a station-master bullying *some* woman!"

"Bartley!"

He sat holding her hand. "Marcia," he said gravely, "we must write to your father at once, and tell him. I want to begin life in the right way, and I think it's only fair to him."

She was enraptured at his magnanimity. "Bartley! that's *like* you! Poor father! I declare—Bartley, I'm afraid I had forgotten him! It's dreadful; but—*you* put everything else out of my head. I do believe I've died and come to life somewhere else!"

"Well, *I* haven't," said Bartley, "and I guess you'd better write to your father. *You'd* better write; at present, he and I are not on speaking terms. Here!" He took out his note-book, and gave her his stylographic pen after striking the fist that held it upon his other fist, in the fashion of the amateurs of that reluctant instrument, in order to bring down the ink.

"Oh, what's that?" she asked.

"It's a new kind of pen. I got it for a notice in the *Free Press*."

"Is Henry Bird going to edit the paper?"

"I don't know, and I don't care," answered Bartley. "I'll go out and get an envelope, and ask the landlord what's the quickest way to get the letter to your father."

He took up his hat, but she laid her hand on his arm. "Oh, send for him!" she said.

"Are you afraid I sha'n't come back?" he demanded, with a laughing kiss. "I want to see him about something else too."

"Well, don't be gone long."

They parted with an embrace that would have fortified older married people for a year's separation. When Bartley came back, she handed him the leaf she had torn out of his book, and sat down beside him while he read it, with her arm over his shoulder.

"Dear Father," the letter ran, "Bartley and I are married. We were married an hour ago, just across the New Hampshire line, by the Rev. Mr. Jessup. Bartley wants I should let you know the very first thing. I am going to Boston with Bartley to-night, and, as soon as we get settled there, I will write again. I want you should forgive us both; but if you won't forgive Bartley, you mustn't forgive me. You were mistaken about Bartley, and I was right. Bartley has told me everything, and I am perfectly satisfied. Love to mother. MARCIA.

"*P.S.*—I *did* intend to visit Nettie Spaulding. But I saw Bartley driving past on his way to the Junction, and I determined to see him if I could before he started for Boston, and tell him I was all wrong, no matter what he said or did afterwards. I ought to have told you I meant to see Bartley;

but then you would not have let me come, and if I had not come, I should have died."

"There's a good deal of Bartley in it," said the young man, with a laugh.

"You don't like it!"

"Yes, I do; it's all right. Did you use to take the prize for composition at boarding-school?"

"Why, I think it's a very good letter for when I'm in such an excited state."

"It's beautiful!" cried Bartley, laughing more and more. The tears started to her eyes.

"Marcia," said her husband fondly, "what a child you are! If ever I do anything to betray your trust in me—"

There came a shuffling of feet outside the door, a clinking of glass and crockery, and a jarring sort of blow, as if some one were trying to rap on the panel with the edge of a heavy-laden waiter. Bartley threw the door open and found the landlord there, red and smiling, with the waiter in his hand.

"I thought I'd bring your supper in here, you know," he explained confidentially, "so 's't you could have it a little more snug. And my wife she kind o' got wind o' what was going on,—women will, you know," he said with a wink,—"and she 's sent ye in some hot biscuit and a little jell, and some of her cake." He set the waiter down on the table, and stood admiring its mystery of napkined dishes.

"She guessed you wouldn't object to some cold chicken, and she's put a little of that on. Sha'n't cost you any more," he hastened to assure them. "Now this is your room till the train comes, and there ain't agoin' to anybody come in here. So you can make yourselves at home. And *I* hope you 'll enjoy your supper as much as we did ourn the night *we* was married. There! I guess I 'll let the lady fix the table; she looks as if she knowed how."

He got himself out of the room again, and then Marcia, who had made him some embarrassed thanks, burst out in praise of his pleasantness.

"Well, he ought to be pleasant," said Bartley. "He's just beaten me on a horse-trade. I 've sold him the colt."

"Sold him the colt!" cried Marcia, tragically dropping the napkin she had lifted from the plate of cold chicken.

"Well, we couldn't very well have taken him to Boston with us. And we couldn't have got there without selling him. You know you haven't married a millionaire, Marcia."

"How much did you get for the colt?"

"Oh, I didn't do so badly. I got a hundred and fifty for him."

"And you had fifteen besides."

"That was before we were married. I gave the

minister five for you,—I think you are worth it. I wanted to give fifteen."

"Well then, you have a hundred and sixty now. Isn't that a great deal?"

"An everlasting lot," said Bartley, with an impatient laugh. "Don't let the supper cool, Marcia!"

She silently set out the feast, but regarded it ruefully. "You oughtn't to have ordered so much, Bartley," she said. "You couldn't afford it."

"I can afford anything when I'm hungry. Besides, I only ordered the oysters and coffee; all the rest is conscience-money—or sentiment—from the landlord. Come, come! cheer up, now! We sha'n't starve to-night, anyhow."

"Well, I know father will help us."

"We sha'n't count on him," said Bartley. "Now *drop* it!" He put his arm round her shoulders and pressed her against him, till she raised her face for his kiss.

"Well, I *will!*" she said, and the shadow lifted itself from their wedding feast, and they sat down and made merry as if they had all the money in the world to spend. They laughed and joked; they praised the things they liked, and made fun of the others.

"How strange! How perfectly impossible it all seems! Why, last night, I was taking supper at Kinney's logging-camp, and hating you at every

mouthful with all my might. Everything seemed against me, and I was feeling ugly, and flirting like mad with a fool from Montreal: she had come out there from Portland for a frolic with the owners' party. You made me do it, Marcia!" he cried jestingly. "And remember that, if you want me to be good, you must be kind. The other thing seems to make me worse and worse."

"I will,—I will, Bartley," she said humbly. "I will try to be kind and patient with you. I will indeed."

He threw back his head, and laughed and laughed. "Poor—poor old Kinney! He 's the cook you know, and he thought I 'd been making fun of him to that woman, and he behaved so, after they were gone, that I started home in a rage; and he followed me out with his hands all covered with dough, and wanted to stop me, but he couldn't for fear of spoiling my clothes—" He lost himself in another paroxysm.

Marcia smiled a little. Then, "What sort of a looking person was she?" she tremulously asked.

Bartley stopped abruptly. "Not one ten-thousandth part as good-looking, nor one millionth part as bright, as Marcia Hubbard!" He caught her and smothered her against his breast.

"I don't care! I don't care!" she cried. "I was to blame more than you, if you flirted with her, and it serves me right. Yes, I will never say anything

to you for anything that happened after I behaved so to you."

"There wasn't anything else happened," cried Bartley. "And the Montreal woman snubbed me soundly before she was done with me."

"Snubbed you!" exclaimed Marcia, with illogical indignation. This delighted Bartley so much that it was long before he left off laughing over her.

Then they sat down, and were silent till she said, "And did you leave him in a temper?"

"Who? Kinney? In a perfect devil of a temper. I wouldn't even borrow some money he wanted to lend me."

"Write to him, Bartley," said his wife seriously. "I love you so I can't bear to have anybody bad friends with you."

XIII.

THE whole thing was so crazy, as Bartley said, that it made no difference if they kept up the expense a few days longer. He took a hack from the depot when they arrived in Boston, and drove to the Revere House, instead of going up in the horse-car. He entered his name on the register with a flourish, "Bartley J. Hubbard and Wife, *Boston*," and asked for a room and fire, with laconic gruffness; but the clerk knew him at once for a country person, and when the call-boy followed him into the parlour where Marcia sat, in the tremor into which she fell whenever Bartley was out of her sight, the call-boy discerned her provinciality at a glance, and made free to say that he guessed they had better let him take their things up to their room, and come up themselves after the porter had got their fire going.

"All right," said Bartley, with hauteur; and he added, for no reason, "Be quick about it."

"Yes, sir," said the boy.

"What time is supper—dinner, I mean?"

"It's ready now, sir."

"Good. Take up the things. Come just as you

are, Marcia. Let him take your cap,—no, keep it on; a good many of them come down in their bonnets."

Marcia put off her sack and gloves, and hastily repaired the ravages of travel as best she could. She would have liked to go to her room just long enough to brush her hair a little, and the fur cap made her head hot; but she was suddenly afraid of doing something that would seem countrified in Bartley's eyes, and she promptly obeyed: they had come from Portland in a parlour car, and she had been able to make a traveller's toilet before they reached Boston.

She had been at Portland several times with her father; but he stopped at a second-class hotel where he had always "put up" when alone, and she was new to the vastness of hotel mirrors and chandeliers, the glossy paint, the frescoing, the fluted pillars, the tessellated marble pavements upon which she stepped when she left the Brussels carpeting of the parlours. She clung to Bartley's arm, silently praying that she might not do anything to mortify him, and admiring everything he did with all her soul. He made a halt as they entered the glittering dining-room, and stood frowning till the head-waiter ran respectfully up to them, and ushered them with sweeping bows to a table, which they had to themselves. Bartley ordered their dinner with nonchalant ease, begin-

ning with soup and going to black coffee with dazzling intelligence. While their waiter was gone with their order, he beckoned with one finger to another, and sent him out for a paper, which he unfolded and spread on the table, taking a toothpick into his mouth, and running the sheet over with his eyes. "I just want to see what's going on to-night," he said, without looking at Marcia.

She made a little murmur of acquiescence in her throat, but she could not speak for strangeness. She began to steal little timid glances about, and to notice the people at the other tables. In her heart she did not find the ladies so very well dressed as she had expected the Boston ladies to be; and there was no gentleman there to compare with Bartley, either in style or looks. She let her eyes finally dwell on him, wishing that he would put his paper away and say something, but afraid to ask, lest it should not be quite right: all the other gentlemen were reading papers. She was feeling lonesome and home-sick, when he suddenly glanced at her and said, "How pretty you look, Marsh!"

"Do I?" she asked, with a little grateful throb, while her eyes joyfully suffused themselves.

"Pretty as a pink," he returned. "Gay,—isn't it?" he continued, with a wink that took her into his confidence again, from which his study of the newspaper had seemed to exclude her. "I'll tell

you what I'm going to do: I'm going to take you to the Museum after dinner, and let you see Boucicault in the 'Colleen Bawn.'" He swept his paper off the table and unfolded his napkin in his lap, and, leaning back in his chair, began to tell her about the play. "We can walk: it's only just round the corner," he said at the end.

Marcia crept into the shelter of his talk,—he sometimes spoke rather loud,—and was submissively silent. When they got into their own room,—which had gilt lambrequin frames, and a chandelier of three burners, and a marble mantel, and marble-topped table and washstand,—and Bartley turned up the flaring gas, she quite broke down, and cried on his breast, to make sure that she had got him all back again.

"Why, Marcia!" he said. "I know just how you feel. Don't you suppose I understand as well as you do that we're a country couple? But I'm not going to give myself away; and you mustn't either. There wasn't a woman in that room that could compare with you,—*dress* or looks!"

"You were splendid," she whispered, "and just like the rest! and that made me feel somehow as if I had lost you."

"I know,—I saw just how you felt; but I wasn't going to say anything for fear you'd give way right there. Come, there's plenty of time before the play

begins. I call this *nice!* Old-fashioned, rather, in the decorations," he said, "but pretty good for its time." He had pulled up two arm-chairs in front of the glowing grate of anthracite; as he spoke, he cast his eyes about the room, and she followed his glance obediently. He had kept her hand in his, and now he held her slim finger-tips in the fist which he rested on his knee. "No; I 'll tell you what, Marcia, if you want to get on in a city, there 's no use being afraid of people. No use being afraid of *anything*, so long as we 're good to each other. And you 've got to believe in me right along. Don't you let anything get you on the wrong track. I believe that as long as you have faith in me, I shall deserve it; and when you don't—"

"Oh, Bartley, you know I didn't doubt you! I just got to thinking, and I was a little worked up! I suppose I 'm excited."

"I knew it! I knew it!" cried her husband. "Don't you suppose I understand *you?*"

They talked a long time together, and made each other loving promises of patience. They confessed their faults, and pledged each other that they would try hard to overcome them. They wished to be good; they both felt they had much to retrieve; but they had no concealments, and they knew that was the best way to begin the future, of which they did their best to conceive seriously. Bartley told her his

plans about getting some newspaper work till he could complete his law studies. He meant to settle down to practice in Boston. "You have to wait longer for it than you would in a country place; but when you get it, it 's worth while." He asked Marcia whether she would look up his friend Halleck if she were in his place; but he did not give her time to decide. "I guess I won't do it. Not just yet, at any rate. He might suppose that I wanted something of him. I 'll call on him when I don't need his help."

Perhaps, if they had not planned to go to the theatre, they would have stayed where they were, for they were tired, and it was very cosy. But when they were once in the street, they were glad they had come out. Bowdoin Square and Court Street and Tremont Row were a glitter of gas-lights, and those shops, with their placarded bargains, dazzled Marcia.

"Is it one of the principal streets?" she asked Bartley.

He gave the laugh of a veteran *habitué* of Boston. "Tremont Row? No. Wait till I show you Washington Street to-morrow. There 's the Museum," he said, pointing to the long row of globed lights on the façade of the building. "Here we are in Scollay Square. There 's Hanover Street; there 's Cornhill; Court crooks down that way; there 's Pemberton Square."

His familiarity with these names estranged him to her again; she clung the closer to his arm, and caught her breath nervously as they turned in with the crowd that was climbing the stairs to the box-office of the theatre. Bartley left her a moment, while he pushed his way up to the little window and bought the tickets. "First-rate seats," he said, coming back to her, and taking her hand under his arm again, "and a great piece of luck. They were just returned for sale by the man in front of me, or I should have had to take something 'way up in the gallery. There 's a regular jam. These are right in the centre of the parquet."

Marcia did not know what the parquet was; she heard its name with the certainty that but for Bartley she should not be equal to it. All her village pride was quelled; she had only enough self-control to act upon Bartley's instructions not to give herself away by any conviction of rusticity. They passed in through the long colonnaded vestibule, with its paintings, and plaster casts, and rows of birds and animals in glass cases on either side, and she gave scarcely a glance at any of those objects, endeared by association, if not by intrinsic beauty, to the Boston play-goer. Gulliver, with the Lilliputians swarming upon him; the painty-necked ostriches and pelicans; the mummied mermaid under a glass bell; the governors' portraits; the stuffed elephant;

Washington crossing the Delaware; Cleopatra applying the asp; Sir William Pepperell, at full-length on canvas; and the Pagan months and seasons in plaster,—if all these are, indeed, the subjects,—were dim phantasmagoria amid which she and Bartley moved scarcely more real. The usher, in his dress-coat, ran up the aisle to take their checks, and led them down to their seats; half a dozen elegant people stood to let them into their places; the theatre was filled with faces. At Portland, where she saw the "Lady of Lyons," with her father, three-quarters of the house was empty.

Bartley only had time to lean over and whisper, "The place is packed with Beacon Street swells,—it's a regular field-night,"—when the bell tinkled and the curtain rose.

As the play went on, the rich jacqueminot-red flamed into her cheeks, and burnt there a steady blaze to the end. The people about her laughed and clapped, and at times they seemed to be crying. But Marcia sat through every part as stoical as a savage, making no sign, except for the flaming colour in her cheeks, of interest or intelligence. Bartley talked of the play all the way home, but she said nothing and in their own room he asked: "Didn't you really like it? Were you disappointed? I haven't been able to get a word out of you about it. Didn't you like Boucicault?"

"I didn't know which he was," she answered, with impassioned exaltation. "I didn't care for him. I only thought of that poor girl, and her husband who despised her—"

She stopped. Bartley looked at her a moment and then caught her to him and fell a-laughing over her, till it seemed as if he never would end. "And you thought,—you thought," he cried, trying to get his breath,—"you thought you were Eily, and I was Hardress Cregan! Oh, I see, I see." He went on making a mock and a burlesque of her tragical hallucination till she laughed with him at last. When he put his hand up to turn out the gas, he began his joking afresh. "The real thing for Hardress to do," he said, fumbling for the key, "is to *blow* it out. That's what Hardress usually does when he comes up from the rural districts with Eily on their bridal tour. That finishes off Eily, without troubling Danny Man. The only drawback is that it finishes off Hardress too: they're both found suffocated in the morning."

XIV.

THE next day, after breakfast, while they stood together before the parlour fire, Bartley proposed one plan after another for spending the day. Marcia rejected them all with perfectly recovered self-composure.

"Then what *shall* we do?" he asked at last.

"Oh, I don't know," she answered, rather absently. She added, after an interval, smoothing the warm front of her dress, and putting her foot on the fender, "What did those theatre-tickets cost?"

"Two dollars," he replied carelessly. "Why?"

Marcia gasped. "Two dollars! Oh, Bartley, we couldn't afford it!"

"It seems we did."

"And here,—how much are we paying here?"

"That room, with fire," said Bartley, stretching himself, "is seven dollars a day—"

"We mustn't stay another instant!" said Marcia, all a woman's terror of spending money on anything but dress, all a wife's conservative instinct, rising within her. "How much have you got left?"

Bartley took out his pocket-book and counted over the bills in it. "A hundred and twenty dollars."

"Why, what has become of it all? We had a hundred and sixty!"

"Well, our railroad tickets were nineteen, the sleeping-car was three, the parlour-car was three, the theatre was two, the hack was fifty cents, and we'll have to put down the other two and a half to refreshments."

Marcia listened in dismay. At the end she drew a long breath. "Well, we must go away from here as soon as possible,—*that* I know. We'll go out and find some boarding-place. That's the first thing."

"Oh, now, Marcia, you're not going to be so severe as that, are you?" pleaded Bartley. "A few dollars, more or less, are not going to keep us out of the poorhouse. I just want to stay here three days: that will leave us a clean hundred, and we can start fair." He was half-joking, but she was wholly serious.

"No, Bartley! Not another hour,—not another minute! Come!" She took his arm and bent it up into a crook, where she put her hand, and pulled him toward the door.

"Well, after all," he said, "it will be some fun looking up a room."

There was no one else in the parlour; in going to the door they took some waltzing steps together.

While she dressed to go out, he looked up places where rooms were let with or without board, in the newspaper. "There don't seem to be a great many," he said meditatively, bending over the open sheet. But he cut out half a dozen advertisements with his editorial scissors, and they started upon their search.

They climbed those pleasant old up-hill streets that converge to the State House, and looked into the houses on the quiet Places that stretch from one thoroughfare to another. They had decided that they would be content with two small rooms, one for a chamber, and the other for a parlour, where they could have a fire. They found exactly what they wanted in the first house where they applied, one flight up, with sunny windows, looking down the street; but it made Marcia's blood run cold when the landlady said that the price was thirty dollars a week. At another place the rooms were only twenty; the position was quite as good, and the carpet and furniture prettier.

This was still too dear, but it seemed comparatively reasonable till it appeared that this was the price without board.

"I think we should prefer rooms with board, shouldn't we?" asked Bartley, with a sly look at Marcia.

The prices were of all degrees of exorbitance, and they varied for no reason from house to house; one

landlady had been accustomed to take more, and another less, but never little enough for Marcia, who overruled Bartley again and again when he wished to close with some small abatement of terms. She declared now that they must put up with one room, and they must not care what floor it was on. But the cheapest room with board was fourteen dollars a week, and Marcia had fixed her ideal at ten: even that was too high for them.

"The best way will be to go back to the Revere House, at seven dollars a day," said Bartley. He had lately been leaving the transaction of the business entirely to Marcia, who had rapidly acquired alertness and decision in it.

She could not respond to his joke. "What is there left?" she asked.

"There isn't anything left," he said. "We've got to the end."

They stood on the edge of the pavement and looked up and down the street, and then, by a common impulse, they looked at the house opposite, where a placard in the window advertised, "Apartments to Let—to Gentlemen only."

"It would be of no use asking there," murmured Marcia, in sad abstraction.

"Well, let's go over and try," said her husband. "They can't do more than turn us out of doors."

"I know it won't be of any use," Marcia sighed,

as people do when they hope to gain something by forbidding themselves hope. But she helplessly followed, and stood at the foot of the door-steps while he ran up and rang.

It was evidently the woman of the house who came to the door and shrewdly scanned them.

"I see you have apartments to let," said Bartley.

"Well, yes," admitted the woman, as if she considered it useless to deny it, "I have."

"I should like to look at them," returned Bartley, with promptness. "Come, Marcia." And, reinforced by her, he invaded the premises before the landlady had time to repel him. "I'll tell you what we want," he continued, turning into the little reception-room at the side of the door, "and if you haven't got it, there's no need to trouble you. We want a fair-sized room, anywhere between the cellar-floor and the roof, with a bed and a stove and a table in it, that sha'n't cost us more than ten dollars a week, with board."

"Set down," said the landlady, herself setting the example by sinking into the rocking-chair behind her, and beginning to rock while she made a brief study of the intruders. "Want it for yourselves?"

"Yes," said Bartley.

"Well," returned the landlady, "I always *have* preferred single gentlemen."

"I inferred as much from a remark which you

made in your front window," said Bartley, indicating the placard.

The landlady smiled. They were certainly a very pretty-appearing young couple, and the gentleman was evidently up-and-coming. Mrs. Nash liked Bartley, as most people of her grade did, at once. "It 's always be'n my exper'ence," she explained, with the lazily rhythmical drawl in which most half-bred New-Englanders speak, "that I seemed to get along rather better with gentlemen. They give less trouble—as a general rule," she added, with a glance at Marcia, as if she did not deny that there were exceptions, and Marcia might be a striking one.

Bartley seized his advantage. "Well, my wife hasn't been married long enough to be unreasonable. I guess you 'd get along."

They both laughed, and Marcia, blushing, joined them.

"Well, I thought when you first come up the steps you hadn't been married—well, not a *great* while," said the landlady.

"No," said Bartley. "It seems a good while to my wife; but we were only married day before yesterday."

"The land!" cried Mrs. Nash.

"Bartley!" whispered Marcia, in soft upbraiding.

"What? Well, say last week, then. We were married last week, and we 've come to Boston to seek our fortune."

His wit overjoyed Mrs. Nash. "You 'll find Boston an awful hard place to get along," she said, shaking her head with a warning smile.

"I shouldn't think so, by the price Boston people ask for their rooms," returned Bartley. "If I had rooms to let, I should get along pretty easily."

This again delighted the landlady. "I guess you ain't going to get out of spirits, anyway," she said. "Well," she continued, "I *have* got a room 't I guess would suit you. Unexpectedly vacated." She seemed to recur to the language of an advertisement in these words, which she pronounced as if reading them. "It 's pretty high up," she said, with another warning shake of the head.

"Stairs to get to it?" asked Bartley.

"Plenty of *stairs*."

"Well, when a place is pretty high up, I like to have plenty of stairs to get to it. I guess we 'll see it, Marcia." He rose.

"Well, I 'll just go up and see if it 's *fit* to be seen first," said the landlady.

"Oh, Bartley!" said Marcia, when she had left them alone, "how *could* you joke so about our just being married!"

"Well, I saw she wanted awfully to ask. And anybody can tell by looking at us, anyway. We can't keep that to ourselves, any more than we can our greenness. Besides, it 's money in our pockets;

she 'll take something off our board for it, you 'll see. Now, will you manage the bargaining from this on? I stepped forward because the rooms were for gentlemen only."

"I guess I 'd better," said Marcia.

"All right; then I 'll take a back seat from this out."

"Oh, I do *hope* it won't be too much!" sighed the young wife. "I 'm so *tired*, looking."

"You can come right along up," the landlady called down through the oval spire formed by the ascending hand-rail of the stairs.

They found her in a broad, low room, whose ceiling sloped with the roof, and had the pleasant irregularity of the angles and recessions of two dormer windows. The room was clean and cosy; there was a table, and a stove that could be used open or shut; Marcia squeezed Bartley's arm to signify that it would do perfectly—if only the price would suit.

The landlady stood in the middle of the floor and lectured: "Now, there! I get five dollars a week for this room; and I gen'ly let it to two gentlemen. It 's just been vacated by two gentlemen unexpectedly; and it 's hard to get gentlemen at this time the year; and that 's the reason I thought of takin' you. As I *say*, I don't much like ladies for inmates, and so I put in the window 'for gentlemen

only.' But it's no use bein' too particular; I can't have the room layin' empty on my hands. If it suits you, you can have it for four dollars. It's high up, and there's no use tryin' to deny it. But there ain't such another view as them winders commands anywheres. You can see the harbour, and pretty much the whole coast."

"Anything extra for the view?" said Bartley, glancing out.

"No, I throw that in."

"Does the price include gas and fire?" asked Marcia, sharpened as to all details by previous interviews.

"It includes the gas, but it don't include the fire," said the landlady firmly. "And it's pretty low at that, as you've found out, I guess."

"Yes, it *is* low," said Marcia. "Bartley, I think we'd better take it."

She looked at him timidly, as if she were afraid he might not think it good enough; she did not think it good enough for him, but she felt that they must make their money go as far as possible.

"All *right!*" he said. "Then it's a bargain."

"And how much more will the board be?"

"Well, there," the landlady said, with candour, "I don't know as I can meet your views. I don't ever give board. But there's plenty of houses right

on the street here where you can get day-board from four dollars a week up."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Marcia; "and that would make it twelve dollars!"

"Why, the dear suz, child!" exclaimed the landlady, "you didn't expect to get it for less?"

"We must," said Marcia.

"Then you'll have to go to a mechanics' boardin'-house."

"I suppose we shall," she returned dejectedly. Bartley whistled.

"Look here," said the landlady, "ain't you from Down East, some'eres?"

Marcia started, as if the woman had recognised them. "Yes," she said.

"Well, now," said Mrs. Nash, "I'm from down Maine way myself, and I'll tell you what I should do, if I was in your *place*. You don't want much of anything for breakfast or tea; you can boil you an egg on the stove here, and you can make your own tea or coffee; and if I was you, I'd go out for my dinners to an eatin'-house. I heard some my lodgers tellin' how they done. Well, I heard the very gentlemen that occupied this room sayin' how they used to go to an eatin'-house, and one'd order one thing, and another another, and then they'd halve it between 'em, and make out a first-rate meal for about a quarter apiece. Plenty of places now

where they give you a cut o' lamb or rib-beef for a shillin', and they bring you bread and butter and potato with it; an' it 's always enough for two. That 's what they *said*. I hain't never tried it myself; but as long as you hain't got anybody but yourselves to care for, there ain't any reason why *you* shouldn't."

They looked at each other.

"Well," added the landlady for a final touch, "*say* fire. That stove won't burn a great deal, anyway."

"All right," said Bartley, "we'll take the room—for a month, at least."

Mrs. Nash looked a little embarrassed. If she had made some concession to the liking she had conceived for this pretty young couple, she could not risk everything. "I always have to get the first week in advance—where there ain't no reference," she suggested.

"Of course," said Bartley, and he took out his pocket-book, which he had a boyish satisfaction in letting her see was well filled. "Now, Marcia," he continued, looking at his watch, "I 'll just run over to the hotel, and give up our room before they get us in for dinner."

Marcia accepted Mrs. Nash's invitation to come and sit with her till the chill was off the room; and she borrowed a pen and paper of her to write home. The note she sent was brief: she was not going to seem to ask anything of her father. But she was going to do what was right; she told him

where she was, and she sent her love to her mother. She would not speak of her things; he might send them or not, as he chose; but she knew he would. This was the spirit of her letter, and her training had not taught her to soften and sweeten her phrase; but no doubt the old man who was like her would understand that she felt no compunction for what she had done, and that she loved him though she still defied him.

Bartley did not ask her what her letter was when she demanded a stamp of him on his return; but he knew. He inquired of Mrs. Nash where these cheap eating-houses were to be found, and he posted the letter in the first box they came to, merely saying, "I hope you haven't been asking any favours, Marsh?"

"No, indeed."

"Because I couldn't stand that."

Marcia had never dined in a restaurant, and she was somewhat bewildered by the one into which they turned. There was a great show of roast, and steak, and fish, and game, and squash and cranberry pie in the window, and at the door a tack was driven through a mass of bills of fare, two of which Bartley plucked off as they entered, with a knowing air, and then threw on the floor when he found the same thing on the table. The table had a marble top, and a silver-plated castor in the centre. The plates were laid with a coarse red doily in a

cocked hat on each, and a thinly plated knife and fork crossed beneath it; the plates were thick and heavy; the handle as well as the blade of the knife was metal, and silvered; besides the castor, there was a bottle of Leicestershire sauce on the table, and salt in what Marcia thought a pepper-box; the marble was of an unctuous translucence in places, and showed the course of the cleansing napkin on its smeared surface. The place was hot, and full of confused smells of cooking; all the tables were crowded, so that they found places with difficulty, and pale, plain girls, of the Provincial and Irish-American type, in fashionable bangs and pull-backs, went about taking the orders, which they wailed out toward a semicircular hole opening upon a counter at the further end of the room; there they received the dishes ordered, and hurried with them to the customers, before whom they laid them with a noisy clacking of the heavy crockery. A great many of the people seemed to be taking hulled corn and milk; baked beans formed another favourite dish, and squash-pie was in large request. Marcia was not critical; roast turkey for Bartley and stewed chicken for herself, with cranberry pie for both, seemed to her a very good and sufficient dinner, and better than they ought to have had. She asked Bartley if this were anything like Parker's; he had always talked to her about Parker's.

"Well, Marcia," he said, folding up his doily, which does not betray use like the indiscreet white napkin, "I 'll just take you round and show you the *outside* of Parker's, and some day we 'll go there and get dinner."

He not only showed her Parker's, but the City Hall; they walked down School Street, and through Washington as far as Boylston: and Bartley pointed out the Old South, and brought Marcia home by the Common, where they stopped to see the boys coasting [1] under the care of the police, between two long lines of spectators.

"The State House," said Bartley, with easy command of the facts, and, pointing in the several directions; "Beacon Street; Public Garden; Back Bay."

She came home to Mrs. Nash joyfully admiring the city, but admiring still more her husband's masterly knowledge of it.

Mrs. Nash was one of those people who partake intimately of the importance of the place in which they live; to whom it is sufficient splendour and prosperity to be a Bostonian, or New-Yorker, or Chicagoan, and who experience a delicious self-flattery in the celebration of the municipal grandeur. In his degree, Bartley was of this sort, and he exchanged compliments of Boston with Mrs. Nash, till they grew into warm favour with each other.

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[1] Sliding down hill in a sled on the snow.

After a while, he said he must go up-stairs and do some writing; and then he casually dropped the fact that he was an editor, and that he had come to Boston to get an engagement on a newspaper; he implied that he had come to take one.

"Well," said Mrs. Nash, smoothing the back of the cat, which she had in her lap, "I guess there ain't anything like our Boston papers. And they say this new one — the *Daily Events* — is goin' to take the lead. You acquainted any with our Boston editors?"

Bartley hemmed. "Well—I know the proprietor of the *Events.*"

"Ah, yes: Mr. Witherby. Well, they say he's got the money. I hear my lodgers talkin' about that paper consid'able. I haven't ever seen it."

Bartley now went up-stairs; he had an idea in his head. Marcia remained with Mrs. Nash a few moments. "He's been in Boston before," she said, with proud satisfaction; "he visited here when he was in college."

"Law, is he college-bred?" cried Mrs. Nash. "Well, I thought he looked 'most too wide-awake for that. He ain't a bit offish. He seems *re'l* practical. What you hurryin' off so for?" she asked, as Marcia rose, and stood poised on the threshold, in act to follow her husband. "Why don't you set here with me, while he's at his writin'? You 'll just

keep talkin' to him and takin' his mind off, the whole while. You stay here!" she commanded hospitably. "You 'll just be in the way, up there."

This was a novel conception to Marcia, but its good sense struck her. "Well, I will," she said. "I 'll run up a minute to leave my things, and then I 'll come back."

She found Bartley dragging the table, on which he had already laid out his writing-materials, into a good light, and she threw her arms round his neck, as if they had been a great while parted.

"Come up to kiss me good luck?" he asked, finding her lips.

"Yes, and to tell you how splendid you are, going right to work this way," she answered fondly.

"Oh, I don't believe in losing time; and I've got to strike while the iron 's hot, if I 'm going to write out that logging-camp business. I 'll take it over to that *Events* man, and hit him with it, while it 's fresh in his mind."

"Yes," said Marcia. "Are you going to write that out?"

"Why, I told you I was. Any objections?" He did not pay much attention to her, and he asked his question jokingly, as he went on making his preparations.

"It 's hard for me to realise that people can care for such things. I thought perhaps you 'd begin

with something else," she suggested, hanging up her sack and hat in the closet.

"No, that's the very thing to begin with," he answered carelessly. "What are you going to do? Want that book to read that I bought on the cars?"

"No, I'm going down to sit with Mrs. Nash while you're writing."

"Well, that's a good idea."

"You can call me when you've done."

"Done!" cried Bartley. "I sha'n't be done till this time to-morrow. I'm going to make a lot about it."

"Oh!" said his wife. "Well, I suppose the more there is, the more you will get for it. Shall you put in about those people coming to see the camp?"

"Yes, I think I can work that in so that old Witherby will like it. Something about a distinguished Boston newspaper proprietor and his refined and elegant ladies, as a sort of contrast to the rude life of the loggers."

"I thought you didn't admire them a great deal?"

"Well, I didn't much. But I can work them up."

Marcia was quite ready to go; Bartley had seated himself at his table, but she still hovered about. "And are you—shall you put that Montreal woman in?"

"Yes, get it all in. She'll work up first-rate."

Marcia was silent. Then, "I shouldn't think you'd put her in," she said, "if she was so silly and disagreeable."

Bartley turned around, and saw the look on her face that he could not mistake. He rose and took her by the chin. "Look here, Marsh!" he said, "didn't you promise me you'd stop that?"

"Yes," she murmured, while the colour flamed into her cheeks.

"And will you?"

"I *did* try—"

He looked sharply into her eyes. "Confound the Montreal woman! I won't put in a word about her. There!" He kissed Marcia, and held her in his arms, and soothed her as if she had been a jealous child.

"Oh, Bartley! Oh, Bartley!" she cried. "I love you so!"

"I think it's a remark you made before," he said, and with a final kiss and laugh, he pushed her out of the door; and she ran down-stairs to Mrs. Nash again.

"Your husband ever write poetry, any?" inquired the landlady.

"No," returned Marcia; "he used to in college, but he says it don't pay."

"One my lodgers—well, she was a lady; you

can't seem to get gentlemen oftentimes in the summer season, for love or money, and I was puttin' up with her,—breakin' joints, as you may say, for the time bein'—*she* wrote poetry; 'n' I guess she found it pretty poor pickin'. Used to write for the weekly papers, she said, 'n' the child'n's magazines. Well, she couldn't get more 'n a doll' or two, 'n' I do' know but what less, for a piece as long as that." Mrs. Nash held her hands about a foot apart. "Used to show 'em to me, and tell me about 'em. I declare I used to pity her. I used to tell her I ruther break stone for my livin'."

Marcia sat talking more than an hour to Mrs. Nash, informing herself upon the history of Mrs. Nash's past and present lodgers, and about the ways of the city, and the prices of provisions and dress-goods. The dearness of everything alarmed and even shocked her; but she came back to her faith in Bartley's ability to meet and overcome all difficulties. She grew drowsy in the close air which Mrs. Nash loved, after all her fatigues and excitements, and she said she guessed she would go up and see how Bartley was getting on. But when she stole into the room and saw him busily writing, she said, "Now I won't speak a word, Bartley," and coiled herself down under a shawl on the bed, near enough to put her hand on his shoulder if she wished, and fell asleep.

XV.

It took Bartley two days to write out his account of the logging-camp. He worked it up to the best of his ability, giving all the facts that he had got out of Kinney, and relieving these with what he considered picturesque touches. He had the newspaper instinct, and he divined that his readers would not care for his picturesqueness without his facts. He therefore subordinated this, and he tried to give his description of the loggers a politico-economical interest, dwelling upon the variety of nationalities engaged in the industry, and the changes it had undergone in what he called its *personnel;* he enlarged upon its present character and its future development in relation to what he styled, in a line of small capitals, with an early use of the favourite newspaper possessive,

COLUMBIA'S MORIBUND SHIPBUILDING.

And he interspersed his text plentifully with exclamatory headings intended to catch the eye with

startling fragments of narration and statement, such as

THE PINE-TREE STATE'S STORIED STAPLE
MORE THAN A MILLION OF MONEY
UNBROKEN WILDERNESS
WILD-CATS, LYNXES, AND BEARS
BITTEN OFF
BOTH LEGS FROZEN TO THE KNEES
CANADIAN SONGS
JOY UNCONFINED
THE LAMPLIGHT ON THEIR SWARTHY FACES.'

He spent a final forenoon in polishing his article up, and stuffing it full of telling points. But after dinner on this last day he took leave of Marcia with more trepidation than he was willing to show, or knew how to conceal. Her devout faith in his success seemed to unnerve him, and he begged her not to believe in it so much.

He seized what courage he had left in both hands, and found himself, after the usual reluctance of the people in the business office, face to face with Mr. Witherby in his private room. Mr. Witherby had lately dismissed his managing editor for his neglect of the true interests of the paper as represented by the counting-room; and was managing the *Events* himself. He sat before a table strewn with newspapers and manuscripts; and as he looked up, Bartley saw that he did not recognise him.

"How do you do, Mr. Witherby? I had the pleasure of meeting you the other day in Maine — at Mr. Willett's logging-camp. Hubbard is my name; remember me as editor of the *Equity Free Press.*"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Witherby, rising and standing at his desk, as a sort of compromise between asking his visitor to sit down and telling him to go away. He shook hands in a loose way, and added: "I presume you would like to exchange. But the fact is, our list is so large already, that we can't extend it just now; we can't—"

Bartley smiled. "I don't want any exchange, Mr. Witherby. I'm out of the *Free Press.*"

"Ah!" said the city journalist, with relief. He added, in a leading tone: "Then—"

"I've come to offer you an article,—an account of lumbering in our State. It's a little sketch that I've prepared from what I saw in Mr. Willett's camp, and some facts and statistics I've picked up. I thought it might make an attractive feature of your Sunday edition."

"The *Events,*" said Mr. Witherby solemnly, "does not publish a Sunday edition!"

"Of course not," answered Bartley, inwardly cursing his blunder,—"I mean your Saturday evening supplement." He handed him his manuscript.

Mr. Witherby looked at it, with the worry of a dull man who has assumed unintelligible duties. He had let the other papers "get ahead of him" on

several important enterprises lately, and he would have been glad to retrieve himself; but he could not be sure that this was an enterprise. He began by saying that their last Saturday supplement was just out, and the next was full; and he ended by declaring, with stupid pomp, that the *Events* preferred to send its own reporters to write up those matters. Then he hemmed, and looked at Bartley, and he would really have been glad to have him argue him out of this position; but Bartley could not divine what was in his mind. The cold fit, which sooner or later comes to every form of authorship, seized him. He said awkwardly he was very sorry, and putting his manuscript back in his pocket, he went out, feeling curiously light-headed, as if his rebuff had been a stunning blow. The affair was so quickly over, that he might well have believed it had not happened. But he was sickeningly disappointed; he had counted upon the sale of his article to the *Events;* his hope had been founded upon actual knowledge of the proprietor's intention; and although he had rebuked Marcia's overweening confidence, he had expected that Witherby would jump at it. But Witherby had not even looked at it.

Bartley walked a long time in the cold winter sunshine. He would have liked to go back to his lodging, and hide his face in Marcia's hands, and let her pity him, but he could not bear the thought of

her disappointment, and he kept walking. At last he regained courage enough to go to the editor of the paper for which he used to correspond in the summer, and which had always printed his letters. This editor was busy too, but he apparently felt some obligations to civility with Bartley; and though he kept glancing over his exchanges as they talked, he now and then glanced at Bartley also. He said that he should be glad to print the sketch, but that they never paid for outside material, and he advised Bartley to go with it to the *Events* or to the *Daily Chronicle-Abstract;* the *Abstract* and the *Brief Chronicle* had lately consolidated, and they were showing a good deal of enterprise. Bartley said nothing to betray that he had already been at the *Events* office, and upon this friendly editor's invitation to drop in again some time, he went away considerably re-inspirited.

"If you should happen to go to the *Chronicle-Abstract* folks," the editor called after him, "you can tell them I suggested your coming."

The managing editor of the *Chronicle-Abstract* was reading a manuscript, and he did not desist from his work on Bartley's appearance, which he gave no sign of welcoming. But he had a whimsical, shrewd, kind face, and Bartley felt that he should get on with him, though he did not rise, and though he let Bartley stand.

"Yes," he said. "Lumbering, hey? Well, there's some interest in that just now, on account of this talk about the decay of our shipbuilding interests. Anything on that point?"

"That's the very point I touch on first," said Bartley.

The editor stopped turning over his manuscript. "Let's see," he said, holding out his hand for Bartley's article. He looked at the first head-line, "What I Know about Logging," and smiled. "Old, but good." Then he glanced at the other headings, and ran his eye down the long strips on which Bartley had written; nibbled at the text here and there a little; returned to the first paragraph and read that through; looked back at something else, and then read the close.

"I guess you can leave it," he said, laying the manuscript on the table.

"No, I guess not," said Bartley, with equal coolness gathering it up.

The editor looked fairly at him for the first time, and smiled. Evidently he liked this. "What's the reason? Any particular hurry?"

"I happen to know that the *Events* is going to send a man down East to write up this very subject. And I don't propose to leave this article here till they steal my thunder, and then have it thrown back on my hands not worth the paper it's written on."

The editor tilted himself back in his chair, and

braced his knees against his table. "Well, I guess you're right," he said. "What do you want for it?"

This was a terrible question. Bartley knew nothing about the prices that city papers paid; he feared to ask too much, but he also feared to cheapen his wares by asking too little. "Twenty-five dollars," he said huskily.

"Let's look at it," said the editor, reaching out his hand for the manuscript again. "Sit down." He pushed a chair toward Bartley with his foot, having first swept a pile of newspapers from it to the floor. He now read the article more fully, and then looked up at Bartley, who sat still, trying to hide his anxiety. "You're not quite a new hand at the bellows, are you?"

"I've edited a country paper."

"Yes? Where?"

"Down in Maine."

The editor bent forward and took out a long narrow blank-book. "I guess we shall want your article. What name?"

"Bartley J. Hubbard." It sounded in his ears like some other name.

"Going to be in Boston some time?"

"All the time," said Bartley, struggling to appear nonchalant. The revulsion from the despair into which he had fallen after his interview with Witherby was still very great. The order on the

counting-room which the editor had given him shook in his hand. He saw his way before him clearly now; he wished to propose some other things that he would like to write; but he was saved from this folly for the time by the editor's saying, in a tone of dismissal: "Better come in to-morrow and see a proof. We shall put you into the Wednesday supplement."

"Thanks," said Bartley. "Good-day."

The editor did not hear him, or did not think it necessary to respond from behind the newspaper which he had lifted up between them, and Bartley went out. He did not stop to cash his order; he made boyish haste to show it to Marcia, as something more authentic than the money itself, and more sacred. As he hurried homeward he figured Marcia's ecstasy in his thought. He saw himself flying up the stairs to their attic three steps at a bound, and bursting into the room, where she sat eager and anxious, and flinging the order into her lap; and then, when she had read it with rapture at the sum, and pride in the smartness with which he had managed the whole affair, he saw himself catching her up and dancing about the floor with her. He thought how fond of her he was, and he wondered that he could ever have been cold or lukewarm.

She was standing at the window of Mrs. Nash's

little reception-room when he reached the house. It was not to be as he had planned, but he threw her a kiss, glad of the impatience which would not let her wait till he could find her in their own room, and he had the precious order in his hand to dazzle her eyes as soon as he should enter. But, as he sprang into the hall, his foot struck against a trunk and some boxes.

"Hello!" he cried. "Your things have come!"

Marcia lingered within the door of the reception-room; she seemed afraid to come out. "Yes," she said faintly; "father brought them. He has just been here."

He seemed there still, and the vision unnerved her as if Bartley and he had been confronted there in reality. Her husband had left her hardly a quarter of an hour, when a hack drove up to the door, and her father alighted. She let him in herself, before he could ring, and waited tremulously for what he should do or say. But he merely took her hand, and stooping over, gave her the chary kiss with which he used to greet her at home when he returned from an absence.

She flung her arms around his neck. "Oh, father!"

"Well, well! There, there!" he said, and then he went into the reception-room with her; and there was nothing in his manner to betray that anything

unusual had happened since they last met. He kept his hat on, as his fashion was, and he kept on his overcoat, below which the skirts of his dress-coat hung an inch or two; he looked old, and weary, and shabby.

"I can't leave Bartley, father," she began hysterically.

"I haven't come to separate you from your husband, Marcia. What made you think so? It's your place to stay with him."

"He's out now," she answered, in an incoherent hopefulness. "He's just gone. Will you wait and see him, father?"

"No, I guess I can't wait," said the old man. "It wouldn't do any good for us to meet now."

"Do you think he coaxed me away? He didn't. He took pity on me,—he forgave me. And I didn't mean to deceive you when I left home, father. But I couldn't help trying to see Bartley again."

"I believe you, Marcia. I understand. The thing had to be. Let me see your marriage certificate."

She ran up to her room and fetched it.

Her father read it carefully. "Yes, that is all right," he said, and returned it to her. He added, after an absent pause: "I have brought your things, Marcia. Your mother packed all she could think of."

"How *is* mother?" asked Marcia, as if this had first reminded her of her mother.

"She is usually well," replied her father.

"Won't you—won't you come up and see our room, father?" Marcia asked, after the interval following this feint of interest in her mother.

"No," said the old man, rising restlessly from his chair, and buttoning at his coat, which was already buttoned. "I guess I sha'n't have time. I guess I must be going."

Marcia put herself between him and the door. "Won't you let me tell you about it, father?"

"About what?"

"How—I came to go off with Bartley. I want you should know."

"I guess I know all I want to know about it, Marcia. I accept the facts. I told you how I felt. What you've done hasn't changed me toward you. I understand you better than you understand yourself; and I can't say that I'm surprised. Now I want you should make the best of it."

"You don't forgive Bartley!" she cried passionately. "Then I don't want you should forgive me!"

"Where did you pick up this nonsense about forgiving?" said her father, knitting his shaggy brows. "A man does this thing or that, and the consequence follows. I couldn't forgive Bartley so that he could escape any consequence of what he's done; and you're not afraid I shall hurt him?"

"Stay and see him!" she pleaded. "He is so

kind to me! He works night and day, and he has just gone out to sell something he has written for the papers."

"I never said he was lazy," returned her father. "Do you want any money, Marcia?"

"No, we have plenty. And Bartley is earning it all the time. I *wish* you would stay and see him!"

"No, I'm glad he didn't happen to be in," said the Squire. "I sha'n't wait for him to come back. It wouldn't do any good just yet, Marcia; it would only do harm. Bartley and I haven't had time to change our minds about each other yet. But I'll say a good word for him to you. You're his wife, and it's your part to help him, not to hinder him. You can make him worse by being a fool; but you needn't be a fool. Don't worry him about other women; don't be jealous. He's your husband now: and the worst thing you can do is to doubt him."

"I won't, father, I won't indeed! I will be good, and I will try to be sensible. Oh, I *wish* Bartley could know how you feel!"

"Don't tell him from *me*," said her father. "And don't keep making promises and breaking them. —I'll help the man in with your things."

He went out, and came in again with one end of a trunk, as if he had been giving the man a hand with it into the house at home, and she suffered him as passively as she had suffered him to do her such

services all her life. Then he took her hand laxly in his, and stooped down for another chary kiss. "Good-bye, Marcia."

"Why, father! Are you going to *leave* me?" she faltered.

He smiled in melancholy irony at the bewilderment, the childish forgetfulness of all the circumstances which her words expressed. "Oh, no! I'm going to take you with me."

His sarcasm restored her to a sense of what she had said, and she ruefully laughed at herself through her tears. "What am I talking about? Give my love to mother. When will you come again?" she asked, clinging about him almost in the old playful way.

"When you want me," said the Squire, freeing himself.

"I'll write!" she cried after him, as he went down the steps; and if there had been, at any moment, a consciousness of her cruelty to him in her heart, she lost it, when he drove away, in her anxious waiting for Bartley's return. It seemed to her that, though her father had refused to see him, his visit was of happy augury for future kindness between them, and she was proudly eager to tell Bartley what good advice her father had given her. But the sight of her husband suddenly turned these thoughts to fear. She trembled, and all that she could say was, "I know father will be all right, Bartley."

"How?" he retorted savagely. "By the way he abused me to you? Where is he?"

"He's gone,—gone back."

"I don't care where he's gone, so he's gone. Did he come to take you home with him? Why didn't you go?—Oh, Marcia!" The brutal words had hardly escaped him when he ran to her as if he would arrest them before their sense should pierce her heart.

She thrust him back with a stiffly extended arm. "Keep away! Don't touch me!" She walked by him up the stairs without looking round at him, and he heard her close their door and lock it.

XVI.

BARTLEY stood for a moment, and then went out and wandered aimlessly about till nightfall. He went out shocked and frightened at what he had done, and ready for any reparation. But this mood wore away, and he came back sullenly determined to let her make the advances toward reconciliation, if there was to be one. Her love had already made his peace, and she met him in the dimly lighted little hall with a kiss of silent penitence and forgiveness. She had on her hat and shawl, as if she had been waiting for him to come and take her out to tea; and on the way to the restaurant she asked him of his adventure among the newspapers. He told her briefly, and when they sat down at their table he took out the precious order and showed it to her. But its magic was gone; it was only an order for twenty-five dollars now; and two hours ago it had been success, rapture, a common hope and a common joy. They scarcely spoke of it, but talked soberly of indifferent things.

She could not recur to her father's visit at once, and he would not be the first to mention it. He

did nothing to betray his knowledge of her intention, as she approached the subject through those feints that women use, and when they stood again in their little attic room she was obliged to be explicit.

"What hurt me, Bartley," she said, "was that you should think for an instant that I would let father ask me to leave you, or that he would ask such a thing. He only came to tell me to be good to you, and help you, and trust you; and not worry you with my silliness and—and—jealousy. And I don't ever mean to. And I know he will be good friends with you yet. He praised you for working so hard;"—she pushed it a little beyond the bare fact;—"he always did that; and I know he's only waiting for a good chance to make it up with you."

She lifted her eyes, glistening with tears, and it touched his peculiar sense of humour to find her offering him reparation, when he had felt himself so outrageously to blame; but he would not be outdone in magnanimity, if it came to that.

"It's all right, Marsh. I was a furious idiot, or I should have let you explain at once. But you see I had only one thought in my mind, and that was my luck, which I wanted to share with you; and when your father seemed to have come in between us again—"

"Oh yes, yes!" she answered. "I understand."

And she clung to him in the joy of this perfect intelligence, which she was sure could never be obscured again.

When Bartley's article came out, she read it with a fond admiration which all her praises seemed to leave unsaid. She bought a scrap-book, and pasted the article into it, and said that she was going to keep everything he wrote. "What are you going to write the next thing?" she asked.

"Well, that 's what I don't know," he answered. "I can't find another subject like that so easily."

"Why, if people care to read about a logging-camp, I should think they would read about almost anything. Nothing could be too common for them. You might even write about the trouble of getting cheap enough rooms in Boston."

"Marcia," cried Bartley, "you 're a treasure! I'll write about that very thing! I know the *Chronicle-Abstract* will be glad to get it."

She thought he was joking, till he came to her after a while for some figures which he did not remember. He had the true newspaper instinct, and went to work with an intention that was as different as possible from the literary intention. He wrote for the effect which he was to make, and not from any artistic pleasure in the treatment. He did not attempt to give it form,—to imagine a young couple like himself and Marcia coming down from the

country to place themselves in the city; he made no effort to throw about it the poetry of their ignorance and their poverty, or the pathetic humour of their dismay at the disproportion of the prices to their means. He set about getting all the facts he could, and he priced a great many lodgings in different parts of the city; then he went to a number of real-estate agents, and, giving himself out as a reporter of the *Chronicle-Abstract*, he interviewed them as to house-rents past and present. Upon these bottom facts, as he called them, he based a "spicy" sketch, which had also largely the character of an *exposé*. There is nothing the public enjoys so much as an *exposé:* it seems to be made in the reader's own interest; it somehow constitutes him a party to the attack upon the abuse, and its effectiveness redounds to the credit of all the newspaper's subscribers. After a week's stay in Boston, Bartley was able to assume the feelings of a native who sees his city falling into decay through the rapacity of its landladies. In the heading of ten or fifteen lines which he gave his sketch, the greater number were devoted to this feature of it; though the space actually allotted to it in the text was comparatively small. He called his report "Boston Boarding-Houses," and he spent a paragraph upon the relation of boarding-houses to civilisation, before detailing his own experience and observation. This part had many of

those strokes of crude picturesqueness and humour which he knew how to give, and was really entertaining; but it was when he came to contrast the rates of house-rent and the cost of provisions with the landladies'

"PERPENDICULAR PRICES,"

that Bartley showed all the virtue of a born reporter. The sentences were vivid and telling; the *ensemble* was very alarming; and the conclusion was inevitable, that, unless this abuse could somehow be reached, we should lose a large and valuable portion of our population,—especially those young married people of small means, with whom the city's future prosperity so largely rested, and who must drift away to find homes in rival communities if the present exorbitant demands were maintained.

As Bartley had foretold, he had not the least trouble in selling this sketch to the *Chronicle-Abstract*. The editor probably understood its essential cheapness perfectly well; but he also saw how thoroughly readable it was. He did not grumble at the increased price which Bartley put upon his work; it was still very far from dear; and he liked the young Down-easter's enterprise. He gave him as cordial a welcome as an overworked man may venture to offer when Bartley came in with his copy, and he felt like doing him a pleasure. Some things out of the

logging-camp sketch had been copied, and people had spoken to the editor about it, which was a still better sign that it was a hit.

"Don't you want to come round to our club to-night?" asked the editor, as he handed Bartley the order for his money across the table. "We have a bad dinner, and we try to have a good time. We're all newspaper men together."

"Why, thank you," said Bartley, "I guess I should like to go."

"Well, come round at half-past five, and go with me."

Bartley walked homeward rather soberly. He had meant, if he sold this article, to make amends for the disappointment they had both suffered before, and to have a commemorative supper with Marcia at Parker's: he had ignored a little hint of hers about his never having taken her there yet, because he was waiting for this chance to do it in style. He resolved that, if she did not seem to like his going to the club, he would go back and withdraw his acceptance. But when he told her he had been invited,—he thought he would put the fact in this tentative way,—she said, "I hope you accepted!"

"Would you have liked me to?" he asked with relief.

"Why, of course! It's a great honour. You'll get acquainted with all those editors, and perhaps

some of them will want to give you a regular place." A salaried employment was their common ideal of a provision for their future.

"Well, that's what I was thinking myself," said Bartley.

"Go and accept at once," she pursued.

"Oh, that isn't necessary. If I get round there by half-past five, I can go," he answered.

His lurking regret ceased when he came into the reception-room, where the members of the club were constantly arriving, and putting off their hats and overcoats, and then falling into groups for talk. His friend of the *Chronicle-Abstract* introduced him lavishly, as our American custom is. Bartley had a little strangeness, but no bashfulness, and, with his essentially slight opinion of people, he was promptly at his ease. These men liked his handsome face, his winning voice, the good-fellowship of his instant readiness to joke; he could see that they liked him, and that his friend Ricker was proud of the impression he made; before the evening was over he kept himself with difficulty from patronising Ricker a little.

The club has grown into something much more splendid and expensive; but it was then content with a dinner certainly as bad as Ricker promised, but fabulously modest in price, at an old-fashioned hotel, whose site was long ago devoured by a dry-goods palace. The drink was commonly water or beer;

occasionally, if a great actor or other distinguished guest honoured the board, some spendthrift ordered champagne. But no one thought fit to go to this ruinous extreme for Bartley. Ricker offered him his choice of beer or claret, and Bartley temperately preferred water to either; he could see that this raised him in Ricker's esteem.

No company of men can fail to have a good time at a public dinner, and the good time began at once with these journalists, whose overworked week ended in this Saturday evening jollity. They were mostly young men, who found sufficient compensation in the excitement and adventure of their underpaid labours, and in the vague hope of advancement; there were grizzled beards among them, for whom neither the novelty nor the expectation continued, but who loved the life for its own sake, and would hardly have exchanged it for prosperity. Here and there was an old fellow, for whom probably all the illusion was gone; but he was proud of his vocation, proud even of the changes that left him somewhat superannuated in his tastes and methods. None, indeed, who have ever known it can wholly forget the generous rage with which journalism inspires its followers. To each of those young men, beginning the strangely fascinating life as reporters and correspondents, his paper was as dear as his king once was to a French noble; to serve it night and day, to wear himself

out for its sake, to merge himself in its glory, and to live in its triumphs without personal recognition from the public, was the loyal devotion which each expected his sovereign newspaper to accept as its simple right. They went and came, with the prompt and passive obedience of soldiers, wherever they were sent, and they struggled each to "get in ahead" of all the others with the individual zeal of heroes. They expanded to the utmost limits of occasion, and they submitted with an anguish that was silent to the editorial excision, compression, and mutilation of reports that were vitally dear to them. What becomes of these ardent young spirits, the inner history of journalism in any great city might pathetically show; but the outside world knows them only in the fine frenzy of interviewing, or of recording the midnight ravages of what they call the devouring element, or of working up horrible murders or tragical accidents, or of tracking criminals who have baffled all the detectives. Hearing their talk Bartley began to realise that journalism might be a very different thing from what he had imagined it in a country printing-office, and that it might not be altogether wise to consider it merely as a stepping-stone to the law.

With the American eagerness to recognise talent, numbers of good fellows spoke to him about his logging sketch; even those who had not read it seemed

to know about it as a hit. They were all delighted to be able to say, "Ricker tells me that you offered it to old Witherby, and he wouldn't look at it!" He found that this fact, which he had doubtfully confided to Ricker, was not offensive to some of the *Events* people who were there; one of them got him aside, and darkly owned to him that Witherby was doing everything that any one man could to kill the *Events*, and that in fact the counting-room was running the paper.

All the club united in abusing the dinner, which in his rustic ignorance Bartley had not found so infamous; but they ate it with perfect appetite and with mounting good spirits. The president brewed punch in a great bowl before him, and rising with a glass of it in his hand, opened a free parliament of speaking, story-telling, and singing. Whoever recollected a song or a story that he liked, called upon the owner of it to sing it or tell it; and it appeared not to matter how old the fun or the music was: the company was resolved to be happy; it roared and clapped till the glasses rang. "You will like this song," Bartley's neighbours to right and left of him prophesied; or, "Just listen to this story of Mason's,—it's capital,"—as one or another rose in response to a general clamour. When they went back to the reception-room they carried the punch-bowl with them, and there, amid a thick cloud of smoke,

two clever amateurs took their places at the piano, and sang and played to their hearts' content, while the rest, glass in hand, talked and laughed, or listened as they chose. Bartley had not been called upon, but he was burning to try that song in which he had failed so dismally in the logging-camp. When the pianist rose at last, he slipped down into the chair, and, striking the chords of the accompaniment, he gave his piece with brilliant audacity. The room silenced itself, and then burst into a roar of applause, and cries of "Encore!" There could be no doubt of the success. "Look here, Ricker," said a leading man at the end of the repetition, "your friend must be one of us!"—and, rapping on the table, he proposed Bartley's name. In that simple time the club voted *viva voce* on proposed members, and Bartley found himself elected by acclamation, and in the act of paying over his initiation-fee to the treasurer, before he had well realised the honour done him. Everybody near him shook his hand, and offered to be of service to him. Much of this cordiality was merely collective good feeling; something of it might be justly attributed to the punch; but the greater part was honest. In this civilisation of ours, grotesque and unequal and imperfect as it is in many things, we are bound together in a brotherly sympathy unknown to any other. We new men have all had our hard rubs, but we do not so much remember

them in soreness or resentment as in the wish to help forward any other who is presently feeling them. If he will but help himself too, a hundred hands are stretched out to him.

Bartley had kept his head clear of the punch, but he left the club drunk with joy and pride, and so impatient to be with Marcia and tell her of his triumphs that he could hardly wait to read the proof of his boarding-house article which Ricker had put in hand at once for the Sunday edition. He found Marcia sitting up for him, and she listened with a shining face while he hastily ran over the most flattering facts of the evening. She was not so much surprised at the honours done him as he had expected; but she was happier, and she made him repeat it all and give her the last details. He was afraid she would ask him what his initiation had cost; but she seemed to have no idea that it had cost anything, and though it had swept away a third of the money he had received for his sketch, he still resolved that she should have that supper at Parker's.

"I consider my future made," he said aloud, at the end of his swift cogitation on this point.

"Oh, yes!" she responded rapturously. "We needn't have a moment's anxiety. But we must be very saving still till you get a place."

"Oh, certainly," said Bartley.

XVII.

DURING several months that followed, Bartley's work consisted of interviewing, of special reporting in all its branches, of correspondence by mail and telegraph from points to which he was sent; his leisure he spent in studying subjects which could be treated like that of the boarding-houses. Marcia entered into his affairs with the keen half-intelligence which characterises a woman's participation in business; whatever could be divined, she was quickly mistress of; she vividly sympathised with his difficulties and his triumphs; she failed to follow him in matters of political detail, or of general effect; she could not be dispassionate or impartial; his relation to any enterprise was always more important than anything else about it. On some of his missions he took her with him, and then they made it a pleasure excursion; and if they came home late with the material still unwritten, she helped him with his notes, wrote from his dictation, and enabled him to give a fuller report than his rivals. She caught up with amusing aptness the technical terms of the profession, and was voluble about getting in

ahead of the *Events* and the other papers; and she was indignant if any part of his report was cut out or garbled, or any feature was spoiled.

He made a "card" of grouping and treating with picturesque freshness the spring openings of the milliners and dry-goods people; and when he brought his article to Ricker, the editor ran it over, and said, "Guess you took your wife with you, Hubbard."

"Yes, I did," Bartley owned. He was always proud of her looks, and it flattered him that Ricker should see the evidences of her feminine taste and knowledge in his account of the bonnets and dress goods. "You don't suppose I could get at all these things by inspiration, do you?"

Marcia was already known to some of his friends whom he had introduced to her in casual encounters. They were mostly unmarried, or if married they lived at a distance, and they did not visit the Hubbards at their lodgings. Marcia was a little shy, and did not quite know whether they ought to call without being asked, or whether she ought to ask them; besides, Mrs. Nash's reception-room was not always at her disposal, and she would not have liked to take them all the way up to her own room. Her social life was therefore confined to the public places where she met these friends of her husband's. They sometimes happened together at a restaurant,

or saw one another between the acts at the theatre, or on coming out of a concert. Marcia was not so much admired for her conversation by her acquaintance, as for her beauty and her style; a rustic reluctance still lingered in her; she was thin and dry in her talk with any one but Bartley, and she could not help letting even men perceive that she was uneasy when they interested him in matters foreign to her.

Bartley did not see why they could not have some of these fellows up in their room for tea; but Marcia told him it was impossible. In fact, although she willingly lived this irregular life with him, she was at heart not at all a Bohemian. She did not like being in lodgings or dining at restaurants; on their horse-car excursions into the suburbs, when the spring opened, she was always choosing this or that little house as the place where she would like to live, and wondering if it were within their means. She said she would gladly do all the work herself; she hated to be idle so much as she now must. The city's novelty wore off for her sooner than for him: the concerts, the lectures, the theatres, had already lost their zest for her, and she went because he wished her to go, or in order to be able to help him with what he was always writing about such things.

As the spring advanced, Bartley conceived the plan of a local study, something in the manner of

the boarding-house article, but on a much vaster scale: he proposed to Ricker a timely series on the easily accessible hot-weather resorts, to be called "Boston's Breathing-Places," and to relate mainly to the seaside hotels and their surroundings. His idea was encouraged, and he took Marcia with him on most of his expeditions for its realisation. These were largely made before the regular season had well begun; but the boats were already running, and the hotels were open, and they were treated with the hospitality which a knowledge of Bartley's mission must invoke. As he said, it was a matter of business, give and take on both sides, and the landlords took more than they gave in any such trade.

On her part Marcia regarded dead-heading as a just and legitimate privilege of the press, if not one of its chief attributes; and these passes on boats and trains, this system of paying hotel-bills by the presentation of a card, constituted distinguished and honourable recognition from the public. To her simple experience, when Bartley told how magnificently the reporters had been accommodated at some civic or commercial or professional banquet, with a table of their own, where they were served with all the wines and courses, he seemed to have been one of the principal guests, and her fear was that his head should be turned by his honours.

But at the bottom of her heart, though she enjoyed the brilliancy of Bartley's present life, she did not think his occupation comparable to the law in dignity. Bartley called himself a journalist now, but his newspaper connection still identified him in her mind with those country editors of whom she had always heard her father speak with such contempt: men dedicated to poverty and the despite of all the local notables who used them. She could not shake off the old feeling of degradation, even when she heard Bartley and some of his fellow-journalists talking in their boastfulest vein of the sovereign character of journalism; and she secretly resolved never to relinquish her purpose of having him a lawyer. Till he was fairly this, in regular and prosperous practice, she knew that she should not have shown her father that she was right in marrying Bartley.

In the meantime their life went ignorantly on in the obscure channels where their isolation from society kept it longer than was natural. Three or four months after they came to Boston, they were still country people, with scarcely any knowledge of the distinctions and differences so important to the various worlds of any city. So far from knowing that they must not walk in the Common, they used to sit down on a bench there, in the pleasant weather, and watch the opening of the spring, among the

lovers whose passion had a publicity that neither surprised nor shocked them. After they were a little more enlightened, they resorted to the Public Garden, where they admired the bridge, and the rock-work, and the statues. Bartley, who was already beginning to get up a taste for art, boldly stopped and praised the Venus, in the presence of the gardeners planting tulip-bulbs.

They went sometimes to the Museum of Fine Arts, where they found a pleasure in the worst things which the best never afterwards gave them; and where she became as hungry and tired as if it were the Vatican. They had a pride in taking books out of the Public Library, where they walked about on tiptoe with bated breath; and they thought it a divine treat to hear the Great Organ play at noon. As they sat there in the Music Hall, and let the mighty instrument bellow over their strong young nerves, Bartley whispered Marcia the jokes he had heard about the organ; and then, upon the wave of aristocratic sensation from this experience, they went out and dined at Copeland's, or Weber's, or Fera's, or even at Parker's: they had long since forsaken the humble restaurant with its doilies and its ponderous crockery, and they had so mastered the art of ordering that they could manage a dinner as cheaply at these finer places as anywhere, especially if Marcia pretended not to care much for her half of the

portion, and connived at its transfer to Bartley's plate.

In his hours of leisure, they were so perpetually together that it became a joke with the men who knew them to say, when asked if Bartley were married, "Very *much* married." It was not wholly their inseparableness that gave the impression of this extreme conjugality; as I said, Marcia's uneasiness when others interested Bartley in things alien to her made itself felt even by these men. She struggled against it because she did not wish to put him to shame before them, and often with an aching sense of desolation she sent him off with them to talk apart, or left him with them if they met on the street, and walked home alone, rather than let any one say that she kept her husband tied to her apron-strings. His club, after the first sense of its splendour and usefulness wore away, was an ordeal; she had failed to conceal that she thought the initiation and annual fees extravagant. She knew no other bliss like having Bartley sit down in their own room with her; it did not matter whether they talked; if he were busy, she would as lief sit and sew, or sit and silently look at him as he wrote. In these moments she liked to feign that she had lost him, that they had never been married, and then come back with a rush of joy to the reality. But on his club nights she heroically sent him off, and spent the

evening with Mrs. Nash. Sometimes she went out by day with the landlady, who had a passion for auctions and cemeteries, and who led Marcia to an intimate acquaintance with such pleasures. At Mount Auburn, Marcia liked the marble lambs, and the emblematic hands pointing upward with the dexter finger, and the infants carved in stone, and the angels with folded wings and lifted eyes, better than the casts which Bartley said were from the antique, in the Museum; on this side her mind was as wholly dormant as that of Mrs. Nash herself. She always came home feeling as if she had not seen Bartley for a year, and fearful that something had happened to him.

The hardest thing about their irregular life was that he must sometimes be gone two or three days at a time, when he could not take her with him. Then it seemed to her that she could not draw a full breath in his absence; and once he found her almost wild on his return; she had begun to fancy that he was never coming back again. He laughed at her when she betrayed her secret, but she was not ashamed; and when he asked her, "Well, what if I hadn't come back?" she answered passionately, "It wouldn't have made much difference to me: I should not have lived.'

The uncertainty of his income was another cause of anguish to her. At times he earned forty or fifty

dollars a week; oftener he earned ten; there was now and then a week when everything that he put his hand to failed, and he earned nothing at all. Then Marcia despaired; her frugality became a mania, and they had quarrels about what she called his extravagance. She embittered his daily bread by blaming him for what he spent on it; she wore her oldest dresses, and would have had him go shabby in token of their adversity. Her economies were frantic child's-play,—methodless, inexperienced, fitful; and they were apt to be followed by remorse in which she abetted him in some wanton excess.

The future of any heroic action is difficult to manage; and the sublime sacrifice of her pride and all the conventional proprieties which Marcia had made in giving herself to Bartley was inevitably tried by the same sordid tests that every married life is put to.

That salaried place which he was always seeking on the staff of some newspaper, proved not so easy to get as he had imagined in the flush of his first successes. Ricker willingly included him among the *Chronicle-Abstract's* own correspondents and special reporters; and he held the same off-and-on relation to several other papers; but he remained without a more definite position. He earned perhaps more money than a salary would have given him, and in their way of living he and Marcia laid up something

out of what he earned. But it did not seem to her that he exerted himself to get a salaried place; she was sure that, if so many others who could not write half so well had places, he might get one if he only kept trying. Bartley laughed at these business-turns of Marcia's, as he called them; but sometimes they enraged him, and he had days of sullen resentment when he resisted all her advances towards reconciliation. But he kept hard at work, and he always owned at last how disinterested her most ridiculous alarm had been.

Once, when they had been talking as usual about that permanent place on some newspaper, she said, "But I should only want that to be temporary, if you got it. I want you should go on with the law, Bartley. I've been thinking about that. I don't want you should always be a journalist."

Bartley smiled. "What could I do for a living, I should like to know, while I was studying law?"

"You could do some newspaper work,—enough to support us,—while you were studying. You said when we first came to Boston that you should settle down to the law."

"I hadn't got my eyes open then. I've got a good deal longer row to hoe than I supposed, before I can settle down to the law."

"Father said you didn't need to study but a little more."

"Not if I were going into the practice at Equity. But it's a very different thing, I can tell you, in Boston: I should have to go in for a course in the Harvard Law School, just for a little start-off."

Marcia was silenced, but she asked, after a moment, "Then you're going to give up the law altogether?"

"I don't know what I'm going to do; I'm going to do the best I can for the present, and trust to luck. I don't like special reporting, for a finality; but I shouldn't like shystering either."

"What's shystering?" asked Marcia.

"It's pettifogging in the city courts. Wait till I can get my basis,—till I have a fixed amount of money for a fixed amount of work,—and then I'll talk to you about taking up the law again. I'm willing to do it whenever it seems the right thing. I guess I should like it, though I don't see why it's any better than journalism, and I don't believe it has any more prizes."

"But you've been a long time trying to get your basis on a newspaper," she reasoned. "Why don't you try to get it in some other way? Why don't you try to get a clerk's place with some lawyer?"

"Well, suppose I was willing to starve along in that way, how should I go about to get such a place?" demanded Bartley with impatience.

"Why don't you go to that Mr. Halleck you

visited here? You used to tell me he was going to be a lawyer."

"Well, if you remember so distinctly what I said about going into the law when I first came to Boston," said her husband angrily, "perhaps you'll remember that I said I shouldn't go to Halleck until I didn't need his help. I shall not go to him *for* his help."

Marcia gave way to spiteful tears. "It seems as if you were ashamed to let them know that you were in town. Are you afraid I shall want to get acquainted with them? Do you suppose I shall want to go to their parties, and disgrace you?"

Bartley took his cigar out of his mouth, and looked blackly at her. "So, that's what you've been thinking, is it?"

She threw herself upon his neck. "No! no, it isn't!" she cried hysterically. "You know that I never thought it till this instant; you know I didn't think it at all; I just *said* it. My nerves are all gone; I don't know *what* I'm saying half the time, and you're as strict with me as if I were as well as ever! I may as well take off my things,—I'm not well enough to go with you to-day, Bartley."

She had been dressing while they talked for an entertainment which Bartley was going to report for the *Chronicle-Abstract;* and now she made a feint of wishing to remove her hat. He would not let

her. He said that if she did not go, he should not; he reproached her with not wishing to go with him any more; he coaxed her laughingly and fondly.

"It's only because I'm not so strong now," she said in a whisper that ended in a kiss on his cheek. "You must walk very slowly, and not hurry me."

The entertainment was to be given in aid of the Indigent Children's Surf-Bathing Society, and it was at the end of June, rather late in the season. But the Society itself was an afterthought, not conceived till a great many people had left town on whose assistance such a charity must largely depend. Strenuous appeals had been made, however: it was represented that ten thousand poor children could be transported to Nantasket Beach, and there, as one of the ladies on the committee said, bathed, clam-baked, and lemonaded three times during the summer at a cost so small that it was a saving to spend the money. Class Day falling about the same time, many exiles at Newport and on the North Shore came up and down; and the affair promised to be one of social distinction, if not pecuniary success. The entertainment was to be varied; a distinguished poet was to read an old poem of his, and a distinguished poetess was to read a new poem of hers; some professional people were to follow with comic singing; an elocutionist was to give impressions of noted public

speakers; and a number of vocal and instrumental amateurs were to contribute their talent.

Bartley had instructions from Ricker to see that his report was very full socially. "We want something lively, and at the same time nice and tasteful, about the whole thing, and I guess you 're the man to do it. Get Mrs. Hubbard to go with you, and keep you from making a fool of yourself about the costumes." He gave Bartley two tickets. "Mighty hard to get, I can tell you, for *love* or money,—especially love," he said; and Bartley made much of this difficulty in impressing Marcia's imagination with the uncommon character of the occasion. She had put on a new dress which she had just finished for herself, and which was a marvel not only of cheapness, but of elegance; she had plagiarised the idea from the costume of a lady with whom she stopped to look in at a milliner's window where she formed the notion of her bonnet. But Marcia had imagined the things anew in relation to herself, and made them her own; when Bartley first saw her in them, though he had witnessed their growth from the germ, he said that he was afraid of her, she was so splendid, and he did not quite know whether he felt acquainted. When they were seated at the concert, and had time to look about them, he whispered, "Well, Marsh, I don't see anything here that comes near you in style," and she flung a little corner

of her drapery out over his hand so that she could squeeze it: she was quite happy again.

After the concert, Bartley left her for a moment, and went up to a group of the committee near the platform, to get some points for his report. He spoke to one of the gentlemen, note-book and pencil in hand, and the gentleman referred him to one of the ladies of the committee, who, after a moment of hesitation, demanded in a rich tone of injury and surprise, "Why! isn't this Mr. Hubbard?" and, indignantly answering herself, "Of *course* it is!" gave her hand with a sort of dramatic cordiality, and flooded him with questions: "When did you come to Boston? Are you at the Hallecks'? Did you come— Or no, you 're *not* Harvard. You 're not *living* in Boston? And what in the world are *you* getting items for? Mr. Hubbard, Mr. Atherton."

She introduced him in a breathless climax to the gentleman to whom he had first spoken, and who had listened to her attack on Bartley with a smile which he was at no trouble to hide from her. "Which question are you going to answer first, Mr. Hubbard?" he asked quietly, while his eyes searched Bartley's for an instant with inquiry which was at once kind and keen. His face had the distinction which comes of being clean-shaven in our bearded times.

"Oh, the last," said Bartley. "I 'm reporting the concert for the *Chronicle-Abstract*, and I want to interview some one in authority about it."

"Then interview *me*, Mr. Hubbard," cried the young lady. "*I 'm* in authority about this affair,— it 's my own invention, as the White Knight says,— and then I 'll interview you afterwards. And you 've gone into journalism, like all the Harvard men! So glad it 's you, for you can be a perfect godsend to the cause if you will. The entertainment hasn't given us all the money we shall want, by any means, and we shall need all the help the press can give us. Ask me any questions you please, Mr. Hubbard: there isn't a person that I wouldn't sacrifice to the last personal particular, if the press will only do its duty in return. You 've no idea how we 've been working during the last fortnight since this Old Man of the Sea-Bathing sprang upon us. I was sitting quietly at home, thinking of anything else in the world, I can assure you, when the atrocious idea occurred to me." She ran on to give a full sketch of the inception and history of the scheme up to the present time. Suddenly she arrested herself and Bartley's flying pencil: "Why, you 're not putting all that nonsense down?"

"Certainly I am," said Bartley, while Mr. Atherton, with a laugh, turned and walked away to talk with some other ladies. "It 's the very thing I want.

I shall get in ahead of all the other papers on this; they haven't had anything like it yet."

She looked at him for a moment in horror. Then, "Well, go on; I would do anything for the cause!" she cried.

"Tell me who 's been here then," said Bartley.

She recoiled a little. "I don't like giving names."

"But I can't say who the people were, unless you do."

"That 's true," said the young lady thoughtfully. She prided herself on her thoughtfulness, which sometimes came before and sometimes after the fact.

"You 're not obliged to say who told you?"

"Of course not."

She ran over a list of historical and distinguished names, and he slyly asked if this and that lady were not dressed so-and-so, and worked in the costumes from her unconsciously elaborate answers; she was afterwards astonished that he should have known what people had on. Lastly, he asked what the committee expected to do next, and was enabled to enrich his report with many authoritative expressions and intimations. The lady became all zeal in these confidences to the public, at last; she told everything she knew, and a great deal that she merely hoped.

"And now come into the committee-room and have a cup of coffee; I know you must be faint with

all this talking," she concluded. "I want to ask you something about yourself." She was not older than Bartley, but she addressed him with the freedom we use in encouraging younger people.

"Thank you," he said coolly; "I can't very well. I must go back to my wife, and hurry up this report."

"Oh! is Mrs. Hubbard here?" asked the young lady with well-controlled surprise. "Present me to her!" she cried, with that fearlessness of social consequences for which she was noted; she believed there were ways of getting rid of undesirable people without treating them rudely.

The audience had got out of the hall, and Marcia stood alone near one of the doors waiting for Bartley. He glanced proudly toward her, and said, "I shall be very glad."

Miss Kingsbury drifted by his side across the intervening space, and was ready to take Marcia impressively by the hand when she reached her; she had already decided her to be very beautiful and elegantly simple in dress, but she found her smaller than she had looked at a distance. Miss Kingsbury was herself rather large,—sometimes, she thought, rather too large: certainly too large if she had not had such perfect command of every inch of herself. In complexion she was richly blonde, with beautiful fair hair roughed over her forehead, as if by a breeze,

and apt to escape in sunny tendrils over the peachy tints of her temples. Her features were massive rather than fine; and though she thoroughly admired her chin and respected her mouth, she had doubts about her nose, which she frankly referred to friends for solution: had it not *too* much of a knob at the end? She seemed to tower over Marcia as she took her hand at Bartley's introduction, and expressed her pleasure at meeting her.

"I don't know why it need be such a surprise to find one's gentlemen friends married, but it always is, somehow. I don't think Mr. Hubbard would have known me, if I hadn't insisted upon his recognising me; I can't blame him: it's three years since we met. Do you help him with his reports? I know you do! You *must* make him lenient to our entertainment,—the cause is so good! How long have you been in Boston? Though I don't know why I should ask that,—you may have always been in Boston! One used to know everybody; but the place *is* so large now. I should like to come and see you; but I'm going out of town to-morrow, for the summer. I'm not really here now, except *ex officio;* I ought to have been away weeks ago, but this Indigent Surf-Bathing has kept me. You've no idea what such an undertaking is. But you *must* let me have your address, and as soon as I get back to town in the fall, I shall insist upon looking you

up. *Good*-bye! I must run away now, and leave you; there are a thousand things for me to look after yet to-day." She took Marcia again by the hand, and superadded some bows and nods and smiles of parting, after she released her, but she did not ask her to come into the committee-room and have some coffee; and Bartley took his wife's hand under his arm and went out of the hall.

"Well," he said, with a man's simple pleasure in Miss Kingsbury's friendliness to his wife, "that's the girl I used to tell you about,—the rich one with the money in her own right, whom I met at the Hallecks'. She seemed to think you were about the thing, Marsh! I saw her eyes open as she came up, and I felt awfully proud of you; you never looked half so well. But why didn't you *say* something?"

"She didn't give me any chance," said Marcia, "and I had nothing to say anyway. I thought she was very disagreeable."

"Disagreeable!" repeated Bartley in amaze.

Miss Kingsbury went back to the committee-room, where one of the amateurs had been lecturing upon her: "Clara Kingsbury can say and do, from the best heart in the world, more offensive things in ten minutes than malice could invent in a week. Somebody ought to go out and drag her away from that reporter by main force. But I presume it's too late

already; she's had time to destroy us all. You'll see that there won't be a shred left of us in *his* paper at any rate. Really, I wonder that, in a city full of nervous and exasperated people like Boston, Clara Kingsbury has been suffered to live. She throws her whole soul into everything she undertakes, and she has gone so *en masse* into this Indigent Bathing, and splashed about in it so, that *I* can't understand how we got anybody to come to-day. Why, I haven't the least doubt that she's offered that poor man a ticket to go down to Nantasket and bathe with the other Indigents; she's treated *me* as if I ought to be personally surf-bathed for the last fortnight; and if there's any chance for us left by her tactlessness, you may be sure she's gone at it with her conscience and simply swept it off the face of the earth."

XVIII.

ONE hot day in August, when Bartley had been doing nothing for a week, and Marcia was gloomily forecasting the future when they would have to begin living upon the money they had put into the savings bank, she reverted to the question of his taking up the law again. She was apt to recur to this in any moment of discouragement, and she urged him now to give up his newspaper work with that wearisome persistence with which women torment the men they love.

"My newspaper work seems to have given me up, my dear," said Bartley. "It's like asking a fellow not to marry a girl that won't have him." He laughed again and whistled; and Marcia burst into fretful, futile tears, which he did not attempt to assuage.

They had been all summer in town; the country would have been no change to them; and they knew nothing of the sea-side except the crowded, noisy, expensive resorts near the city. Bartley wished her to go to one of these for a week or two, at any rate, but she would not; and in fact neither of them had the born citizen's conception of the value of a sum-

mer vacation. But they had found their attic intolerable; and, the single gentlemen having all given up their rooms by this time, Mrs. Nash let Marcia have one lower down, where they sat looking out on the hot street.

"Well," cried Marcia at last, "you don't care for my feelings, or you would take up the law again."

Her husband rose with a sigh that was half a curse, and went out. After what she had said, he would not give her the satisfaction of knowing what he meant to do; but he had it in his head to go to that Mr. Atherton to whom Miss Kingsbury had introduced him, and ask his advice; he had found out that Mr. Atherton was a lawyer, and he believed that he would tell him what to do. He could at least give him some authoritative discouragement which he might use in these discussions with Marcia.

Mr. Atherton had his office in the *Events* building, and Bartley was on his way thither when he met Ricker.

"Seen Witherby?" asked his friend. "He was round looking for you."

"What does Witherby want with me?" asked Bartley, with a certain resentment.

"Wants to give you the managing-editorship of the *Events*," said Ricker jocosely.

"Pshaw! Well, he knows where to find me, if he wants me very badly."

"Perhaps he doesn't," suggested Ricker. "In that case, you'd better look him up."

"Why, you don't advise—"

"Oh, *I* don't advise anything! But if *he* can let bygones be bygones, I guess *you* can afford to! I don't know just what he wants with you, but if he offers you anything like a basis, you'd better take it."

Bartley's basis had come to be a sort of byword between them; Ricker usually met him with some such demand as, "Well, what about the basis?" or, "How's your poor basis?" Bartley's ardour for a salaried position amused him, and he often tried to argue him out of it. "You're much better off as a free lance. You make as much money as most of the fellows in places, and you lead a pleasanter life. If you were on any one paper, you'd have to be on duty about fifteen hours out of the twenty-four; you'd be out every night till three or four o'clock; you'd have to do fires, and murders, and all sorts of police business; and now you work mostly on fancy jobs,—something you suggest yourself, or something you're specially asked to do. That's a kind of compliment, and it gives you scope."

Nevertheless, if Bartley had his heart set upon a basis, Ricker wanted him to have it. "Of course," he said, "I was only joking about the basis. But if Witherby should have something permanent to offer,

don't quarrel with your bread and butter, and don't hold yourself *too* cheap. Witherby's going to get all he can, for as little as he can, every time."

Ricker was a newspaper man in every breath. His great interest in life was the *Chronicle-Abstract*, which paid him poorly and worked him hard. To get in ahead of the other papers was the object for which he toiled with unremitting zeal; but after that he liked to see a good fellow prosper, and he had for Bartley that feeling of comradery which comes out among journalists when their rivalries are off. He would hate to lose Bartley from the *Chronicle-Abstract;* if Witherby meant business, Bartley and he might be excoriating each other before a week passed, in sarcastic references to "our esteemed contemporary of the *Events*," and "our esteemed contemporary of the *Chronicle-Abstract;*" but he heartily wished him luck, and hoped it might be some sort of inside work.

When Ricker left him, Bartley hesitated. He was half minded to go home and wait for Witherby to look him up, as the most dignified and perhaps the most prudent course. But he was curious and impatient, and he was afraid of letting the chance, whatever it might be, slip through his fingers. He suddenly resolved upon a little *ruse*, which would still oblige Witherby to make the advance, and yet would risk nothing by delay. He mounted to

Witherby's room in the *Events* building, and pushed open the door. Then he drew back, embarrassed, as if he had made a mistake. "Excuse me," he said, "isn't Mr. Atherton's office on this floor?"

Witherby looked up from the papers on his desk, and cleared his throat. When he overreached himself he was apt to hold any party to the transaction accountable for his error. Ever since he refused Bartley's paper on the logging-camp, he had accused him in his heart of fraud, because he had sold the rejected sketch to another paper, and anticipated Witherby's tardy enterprise in the same direction. Each little success that Bartley made added to Witherby's dislike; and whilst Bartley had written for all the other papers, he had never got any work from the *Events*. Witherby had the guilty sense of having hated him as he looked up, and Bartley on his part was uneasily sensible of some mocking paragraphs of a more or less personal cast, which he had written in the *Chronicle-Abstract*, about the enterprise of the *Events*.

"Mr. Atherton is on the floor above," said Witherby; "but I'm very glad you happened to look in, Mr. Hubbard. I—I was just thinking about you. Ah—won't you take a chair?"

"Thanks," said Bartley, non-committally; but he sat down in the chair which the other rose to offer him.

Witherby fumbled about among the things on his desk before he resumed his own seat. "I hope you have been well since I saw you?"

"Oh, yes, I'm always well. How have you been?" Bartley wondered whither this exchange of civilities tended; but he believed he could keep it up as long as old Witherby could.

"Why, I have not been very well," said Witherby, getting into his chair and taking up a paper-weight to help him to talk. "The fact is, I find that I have been working too hard. I have undertaken to manage the editorial department of the *Events* in addition to looking after its business, and the care has been too great. It has told upon me. I flatter myself that I have not allowed either department to suffer—"

He referred this point so directly to him, that Bartley made a murmur of assent, and Witherby resumed.

"But the care has told upon me. I am not so well as I could wish. I need rest, and I need help," he added.

Bartley had by this time made up his mind that, if Witherby had anything to say to him, he should say it unaided.

Witherby put down the paper-weight, and gave his attention for a moment to a paper-cutter. "I don't know whether you have heard that Mr. Clayton is going to leave us?"

"No," Bartley said, "I hadn't heard that."

"Yes, he is going to leave us. Mr. Clayton and I have not agreed upon some points, and we have both judged it best that we should part." Witherby paused again, and changed the positions of his ink-stand and mucilage-bottle. "Mr. Clayton has failed me, as I may say, at the last moment, and we have been compelled to part. I found Mr. Clayton—unpractical."

He looked again at Bartley, who said, "Yes?"

"Yes. I found Mr. Clayton so much at variance in his views with—with my own views—that I could do nothing with him. He has used language to me which I am sure he will regret. But that is neither here nor there; he is going. I have had my eye on you, Mr. Hubbard, ever since you came to Boston, and have watched your career with interest. But I thought of Mr. Clayton, in the first instance, because he was already attached to the *Events*, and I wished to promote him. Office during good behaviour, and promotion in the direct line: I 'm *that* much of a civil-service reformer," said Witherby.

"Certainly," said Bartley.

"But of course my idea in starting the *Events* was to make money."

"Of course."

"I hold that the first duty of a public journal is

to make money for the owner; all the rest follows naturally."

"You 're quite right, Mr. Witherby," said Bartley. "Unless it makes money, there can be no enterprise about it, no independence,—nothing. That was the way I did with my little paper down in Maine. The first thing—I told the committee when I took hold of the paper—is to keep it from losing money; the next is to make money with it. First peaceable, then pure: that 's what I told them."

"Precisely so!" Witherby was now so much at his ease with Bartley that he left off tormenting the things on his desk, and used his hands in gesticulating. "Look at the churches themselves! No church can do any good till it 's on a paying basis. As long as a church is in debt, it can't secure the best talent for the pulpit or the choir, and the members go about feeling discouraged and out of heart. It 's just so with a newspaper. I say that a paper does no good till it pays; it has no influence, its motives are always suspected, and you 've got to make it pay by hook or by crook, before you can hope to—to—forward any good cause by it. That 's what *I* say. Of course," he added, in a large smooth way, "I 'm not going to contend that a newspaper should be run *solely* in the interest of the counting-room. Not at all! But I do contend that, when the counting-room protests against a

certain course the editorial room is taking, it ought to be respectfully listened to. There are always two sides to every question. Suppose all the newspapers pitch in—as they sometimes do—and denounce a certain public enterprise: a projected scheme of railroad legislation, or a peculiar system of banking, or a co-operative mining interest, and the counting-room sends up word that the company advertises heavily with us; shall *we* go and join indiscriminately in that hue and cry, or shall we give our friends the benefit of the doubt?"

"Give them the benefit of the doubt," answered Bartley. "That's what I say."

"And so would any other practical man!" said Witherby. "And that's just where Mr. Clayton and I differed. Well, I needn't allude to him any more," he added leniently. "What I wish to say is this, Mr. Hubbard. I am overworked, and I feel the need of some sort of relief. I know that I have started the *Events* in the right line at last,—the only line in which it can be made a great, useful, and respectable journal, efficient in every good cause,—and what I want now is some sort of assistant in the management who shall be in full sympathy with my own ideas. I don't want a mere slave,—a tool; but I do want an independent, right-minded man, who shall be with me for the success of the paper the whole time and every time, and shall not be

continually setting up his will against mine on all sorts of *doctrinaire* points. That was the trouble with Mr. Clayton. I have nothing against Mr. Clayton personally; he is an excellent young man in very many respects; but he was all wrong about journalism, all wrong, Mr. Hubbard. I talked with him a great deal, and tried to make him see where his interest lay. He had been on the paper as a reporter from the start, and I wished very much to promote him to this position; which he could have made the best position in the country. The *Events* is an evening paper; there is no night-work; and the whole thing is already thoroughly systematised. Mr. Clayton had plenty of talent, and all he had to do was to step in under my direction and put his hand on the helm. But, no! I should have been glad to keep him in a subordinate capacity; but I had to let him go. He said that he would not report the conflagration of a peanut-stand for a paper conducted on the principles I had developed to him. Now, that is no way to talk. It's absurd."

"Perfectly." Bartley laughed his rich, caressing laugh, in which there was the insinuation of all worldly-wise contempt for Clayton and all worldly-wise sympathy with Witherby. It made Witherby feel good,—better perhaps than he had felt at any time since his talk with Clayton.

"Well, now, what do you say, Mr. Hubbard?

Can't we make some arrangement with you?" he asked, with a burst of frankness.

"I guess you can," said Bartley. The fact that Witherby needed him was so plain that he did not care to practise any finesse about the matter.

"What are your present engagements?"

"I haven't any."

"Then you can take hold at once?"

"Yes."

"That's good!" Witherby now entered at large into the nature of the position which he offered Bartley. They talked a long time, and in becoming better acquainted with each other's views, as they called them, they became better friends. Bartley began to respect Witherby's business ideas, and Witherby in recognising all the admirable qualities of this clear-sighted and level-headed young man began to feel that he had secretly liked him from the first, and had only waited a suitable occasion to unmask his affection. It was arranged that Bartley should come on as Witherby's assistant, and should do whatever he was asked to do in the management of the paper; he was to write on topics as they occurred to him, or as they were suggested to him. "I don't say whether this will lead to anything more, Mr. Hubbard, or not; but I do say that you will be in the direct line of promotion."

"Yes, I understand that," said Bartley.

"And now as to terms," continued Witherby, a little tremulously.

"And now as to terms," repeated Bartley to himself; but he said nothing aloud. He felt that Witherby had cut out a great deal of work for him, and work of a kind that he could not easily find another man both willing and able to do. He resolved that he would have all that his service was worth.

"What should you think of twenty dollars a week?" asked Witherby.

"I shouldn't think it was enough," said Bartley, amazed at his own audacity, but enjoying it, and thinking how he had left Marcia with the intention of offering himself to Mr. Atherton as a clerk for ten dollars a week. "There is a great deal of labour in what you propose, and you command my whole time. You would not like to have me do any work outside of the *Events*."

"No," Witherby assented. "Would twenty-five be nearer the mark?" he inquired soberly.

"It would be nearer, certainly," said Bartley. "But I guess you had better make it thirty." He kept a quiet face, but his heart throbbed.

"Well, say thirty, then," replied Witherby so promptly that Bartley perceived with a pang that he might as easily have got forty from him. But it was now too late, and a salary of fifteen hundred a year

passed the wildest hopes he had cherished half an hour before.

"All right," he said quietly. "I suppose you want me to take hold at once?"

"Yes, on Monday. Oh, by the way," said Witherby, "there is one little piece of outside work which I should like you to finish up for us; and we'll agree upon something extra for it, if you wish. I mean our Solid Men series. I don't know whether you've noticed the series in the *Events?*"

"Yes," said Bartley, "I have."

"Well, then, you know what they are. They consist of interviews—guarded and inoffensive as respects the sanctity of private life—with our leading manufacturers and merchant princes at their places of business and their residences, and include a description of these, and some account of the lives of the different subjects."

"Yes, I have seen them," said Bartley. "I've noticed the general plan."

"You know that Mr. Clayton has been doing them. He made them a popular feature. The parties themselves were very much pleased with them."

"Oh, people are always tickled to be interviewed," said Bartley. "I know they put on airs about it, and go round complaining to each other about the violation of confidence, and so on; but they all like it. You know I reported that Indigent Surf-Bathing

entertainment in June for the *Chronicle-Abstract*. I knew the lady who got it up, and I interviewed her after the entertainment."

"Miss Kingsbury?"

"Yes." Witherby made an inarticulate murmur of respect for Bartley in his throat, and involuntarily changed toward him, but not so subtly that Bartley's finer instinct did not take note of the change. "She was a fresh subject, and she told me everything. Of course I printed it all. She was awfully shocked,—or pretended to be,—and wrote me a very O-dear-how-could-you note about it. But I went round to the office the next day, and I found that nearly every lady mentioned in the interview had ordered half a dozen copies of that issue sent to her seaside address, and the office had been full of Beacon Street swells all the morning buying *Chronicle-Abstracts*,—'the one with the report of the Concert in it.'" These low views of high society, coupled with an apparent familiarity with it, modified Witherby more and more. He began to see that he had got a prize. "The way to do with such fellows as your Solid Men," continued Bartley, "is to submit a proof to 'em. They never know exactly what to do about it, and so you print the interview with their approval, and make 'em *particeps criminis*. I'll finish up the series for you, and I won't make any very heavy extra charge."

"I should wish to pay you whatever the work was worth," said Witherby, not to be outdone in nobleness.

"All right; we shan't quarrel about that, at any rate."

Bartley was getting toward the door, for he was eager to be gone now to Marcia, but Witherby followed him up as if willing to detain him. "My wife," he said, "knows Miss Kingsbury. They have been on the same charities together."

"I met her a good while ago, when I was visiting a chum of mine at his father's house here. I didn't suppose she'd know me; but she did at once, and began to ask me if I was at the Hallecks'—as if I had never gone away."

"Mr. Ezra B. Halleck?" inquired Witherby reverently. "Leather trade?"

"Yes," said Bartley. "I believe his first name was Ezra. Ben Halleck was my friend. Do you know the family?" asked Bartley.

"Yes, we have met them—in society. I hope you're pleasantly situated where you are, Mr. Hubbard? Should be glad to have you call at the house."

"Thank you," said Bartley, "my wife will be glad to have Mrs. Witherby call."

"Oh!" cried Witherby. "I didn't know you were married! That's good! There's nothing like mar-

riage, Mr. Hubbard, to keep a man going in the right direction. But you 've begun pretty young."

"Nothing like taking a thing in time," answered Bartley. "But I haven't been married a great while; and I'm not so young as I look. Well, good afternoon, Mr. Witherby."

"*What* did you say was your address?" asked Witherby, taking out his note-book. "My wife will certainly call, she's down at Nantasket now, but she'll be up the first part of September, and then she'll call. *Good* afternoon."

They shook hands at last, and Bartley ran home to Marcia. He burst into the room with a glowing face. "Well, Marcia," he shouted, "I've got my basis!"

"Hush! No! Don't be so loud! You haven't!" she answered, springing to her feet. "I don't believe it! How hot you are!"

"I've been running—almost all the way from the *Events* office. I've got a place on the *Events*,—assistant managing-editor,—thirty dollars a week," he panted.

"I knew you would succeed yet,—I knew you would, if I could only have a little patience. I've been scolding myself ever since you went. I thought you were going to do something desperate, and I had driven you to it. But Bartley, Bartley! It can't be true, is it? Here, here! Do take this fan.

Or no, I 'll fan you, if you 'll let me sit on your knee! O poor thing, how het you are! But I thought you wouldn't write for the *Events;* I thought you hated that old Witherby, who acted so ugly to you when you first came."

"Oh, Witherby is a pretty good old fellow," said Bartley, who had begun to get his breath again. He gave her a full history of the affair, and they rejoiced together over it, and were as happy as if Bartley had been celebrating a high and honourable good fortune. She was too ignorant to feel the disgrace, if there were any, in the compact which Bartley had closed, and he had no principles, no traditions, by which to perceive it. To them it meant unlimited prosperity; it meant provision for the future, which was to bring a new responsibility and a new care.

"We will take the parlour with the alcove now," said Bartley. "Don't excite yourself," he added, with tender warning.

"No, no," she said, pillowing her head on his shoulder, and shedding peaceful tears.

"It doesn't seem as if we should ever quarrel again, does it?"

"No, no! We never shall," she murmured. "It has always come from my worrying you about the law, and I shall never do that any more. If you like journalism better, I shall not urge you any more to leave it, now you 've got your basis."

"But I'm going on with the law, now, for that very reason. I shall read law all my leisure time. I feel independent, and I shall not be anxious about the time I give, because I shall know that I can afford it."

"Well, only you mustn't overdo." She put her lips against his cheek. "You are more to me than anything you can do for me."

"Oh, Marcia!"

XIX.

Now that Bartley had got his basis, and had no favours to ask of any one, he was curious to see his friend Halleck again; but when, in the course of the Solid Men series, he went to interview "A Nestor of the Leather Interest," as he meant to call the elder Halleck, he resolved to let him make all the advances. On a legitimate business errand it should not matter to him whether Mr. Halleck welcomed him or not. The old man did not wait for Bartley to explain why he came; he was so simply glad to see him that Bartley felt a little ashamed to confess that he had been eight months in Boston without making himself known. He answered all the personal questions with which Mr. Halleck plied him; and in his turn he inquired after his college friend.

"Ben is in Europe," said his father. "He has been there all summer; but we expect him home about the middle of September. He 's been a good while settling down," continued the old man, with an unconscious sigh. "He talked of the law at first, and then he went into business with me; but he didn't seem to find his calling in it; and now he 's

taken up the law again. He's been in the Law School at Cambridge, and he's going back there for a year or two longer. I thought you used to talk of the law yourself when you were with us, Mr. Hubbard."

"Yes, I did," Bartley assented. "And I haven't given up the notion yet. I've read a good deal of law already; but when I came up to Boston, I had to go into newspaper work till I could see my way out of the woods."

"Well," said Mr. Halleck, "that's right. And you say you like the arrangement you've made with Mr. Witherby?"

"It's ideal—for me," answered Bartley.

"Well, that's good," said the old man. "And you've come to interview me. Well, that's all right. I'm not much used to being in print, but I shall be glad to tell you all I know about leather."

"You may depend upon my not saying anything that will be disagreeable to you, Mr. Halleck," said Bartley, touched by the old man's trusting friendliness. When his inquisition ended, he slipped his note-book back into his pocket, and said with a smile, "We usually say something about the victim's private residence, but I guess I'll spare you that, Mr. Halleck."

"Why, we live in the old place, and I don't suppose there is much to say. We are plain people, and

we don't like to change. When I built there thirty years ago, Rumford Street was one of the most desirable streets in Boston. There was no Back Bay then, you know, and we thought we were doing something very fashionable. But fashion has drifted away, and left us high and dry enough on Rumford Street; though we don't mind it. We keep the old house and the old garden pretty much as you saw them. You can say whatever you think best. There 's a good deal of talk about the intrusiveness of the newspapers; all I know is that they 've never intruded upon me. We shall not be afraid that you will abuse our house, Mr. Hubbard, because we expect you to come there again. When shall it be? Mrs. Halleck and I have been at home all summer; we find it the most comfortable place; and we shall be very glad if you 'll drop in any evening and take tea with us. We keep the old hours; we 've never taken kindly to the late dinners. The girls are off at the mountains, and you'd see nobody but Mrs. Halleck. Come this evening!" cried the old man, with mounting cordiality.

His warmth, as he put his hand on Bartley's shoulder, made the young man blush again for the reserve with which he had been treating his own affairs. He stammered out, hoping that the other would see the relevancy of the statement, "Why, the fact is, Mr Halleck, I—I 'm married."

"Married?" said Mr. Halleck. "Why didn't you tell me before? Of course we want Mrs. Hubbard too. Where are you living? We won't stand upon ceremony among old friends. Mrs. Halleck will come with the carriage and fetch Mrs. Hubbard, and your wife must take that for a call. Why, you don't know how glad we shall be to have you both! I wish Ben was married. You 'll come?"

"Of course we will," said Bartley. "But you mustn't let Mrs. Halleck send for us; we can walk perfectly well."

"*You* can walk if you want, but Mrs. Hubbard shall ride," said the old man.

When Bartley reported this to Marcia, "Bartley!" she cried; "in her carriage? I 'm afraid."

"Nonsense! She 'll be a great deal more afraid than you are. She 's the bashfulest old lady you ever saw. All that I hope is that you won't overpower her."

"Bartley, hush! Shall I wear my silk, or—"

"Oh, wear the silk, by all means. Crush them at a blow!"

Rumford Street is one of those old-fashioned thoroughfares at the West End of Boston, which are now almost wholly abandoned to boarding-houses of the poorer class. Yet they are charming streets, quiet, clean, and respectable, and worthy still to be the homes, as they once were, of solid citizens. The

red brick houses, with their swell fronts, looking in perspective like a succession of round towers, are reached by broad granite steps, and their doors are deeply sunken within the wagon-roofs of white-painted Roman arches. Over the door there is sometimes the bow of a fine transom, and the parlour windows on the first floor of the swell front have the same azure gleam as those of the beautiful old houses which front the Common on Beacon Street.

When her husband bought his lot there, Mrs. Halleck could hardly believe that a house on Rumford Street was not too fine for her. They had come to the city simple and good young village people, and simple and good they had remained, through the advancing years which had so wonderfully—Mrs. Halleck hoped, with a trembling heart, not wickedly — prospered them. They were of faithful stock, and they had been true to their traditions in every way. One of these was constancy to the orthodox religious belief in which their young hearts had united, and which had blessed all their life; though their charity now abounded perhaps more than their faith. They still believed that for themselves there was no spiritual safety except in their church; but since their younger children had left it they were forced tacitly to own that this might not be so in all cases. Their last endeavour for the church in Ben's case

was to send him to the college where he and Bartley met; and this was such a failure on the main point, that it left them remorsefully indulgent. He had submitted, and had foregone his boyish dreams of Harvard, where all his mates were going; but the sacrifice seemed to have put him at odds with life. The years which had proved the old people mistaken would not come back upon their recognition of their error. He returned to the associations from which they had exiled him too much estranged to resume them, and they saw, with the unavailing regrets which visit fathers and mothers in such cases, that the young know their own world better than their elders can know it, and have a right to be in it and of it, superior to any theory of their advantage which their elders can form. Ben was not the fellow to complain; in fact, after he came home from college, he was allowed to shape his life according to his own rather fitful liking. His father was glad now to content him in anything he could, it was so very little that Ben asked. If he had suffered it, perhaps his family would have spoiled him.

The Halleck girls went early in July to the Profile House, where they had spent their summers for many years; but the old people preferred to stay at home, and only left their large comfortable house for short absences. Their ways of life had been

fixed in other times, and Mrs. Halleck liked better than mountain or sea the high-walled garden that stretched back of their house to the next street. They had bought through to this street when they built, but they had never sold the lot that fronted on it. They laid it out in box-bordered beds, and there were clumps of hollyhocks, sunflowers, lilies, and phlox, in different corners; grapes covered the trellised walls; there were some pear-trees that bore blossoms, and sometimes ripened their fruit beside the walk. Mrs. Halleck used to work in the garden; her husband seldom descended into it, but he liked to sit on the iron-railed balcony overlooking it from the back parlour.

As for the interior of the house, it had been furnished, once for all, in the worst style of that most tasteless period of household art, which prevailed from 1840 to 1870; and it would be impossible to say which were most hideous, the carpets or the chandeliers, the curtains or the chairs and sofas; crude colours, lumpish and meaningless forms, abounded in a rich and horrible discord. The old people thought it all beautiful, and those daughters who had come into the new house as little girls revered it; but Ben and his youngest sister, who had been born in the house, used the right of children of their parents' declining years to laugh at it. Yet they laughed with a sort of filial tenderness.

"I suppose you know how frightful you have everything about you, Olive," said Clara Kingsbury, one day after the Eastlake movement began, as she took a comprehensive survey of the Halleck drawing-room through her *pince-nez*.

"Certainly," answered the youngest Miss Halleck. "It's a perfect chamber of horrors. But I like it, because everything's so exquisitely in keeping."

"Really, I feel as if I had seen it all for the first time," said Miss Kingsbury. "I don't believe I ever realised it before."

She and Olive Halleck were great friends, though Clara was fashionable and Olive was not.

"It would all have been different," Ben used to say, in whimsical sarcasm of what he had once believed, "if I had gone to Harvard. Then the fellows in my class would have come to the house with me, and we should have got into the right set naturally. Now, we're outside of everything, and it makes me mad, because we've got money enough to be inside, and there's nothing to prevent it. Of course, I'm not going to say that leather is quite as blameless as cotton socially, but taken in the wholesale form it isn't so very malodorous; and it's quite as good as other things that are accepted."

"It's not the leather, Ben," answered Olive, "and it's not your not going to Harvard altogether, though that has something to do with it. The trouble's in

me. I was at school with all those girls Clara goes with, and I could have been in that set if I 'd wanted; but I didn't really want to. I saw, at a very tender age, that it was going to be more trouble than it was worth, and I just quietly kept out of it. Of course, I couldn't have gone to Papanti's without a fuss, but mother would have let me go if I had made the fuss; and I could be hand and glove with those girls now, if I tried. They come here whenever I ask them; and when I meet them on charities, I 'm awfully popular. No, if I 'm not fashionable, it 's my own fault. But what difference does it make to you, Ben? You don't want to marry any of those girls as long as your heart 's set on that unknown charmer of yours." Ben had once seen his charmer in the street of a little Down East town, where he met her walking with some other boarding-school girls; in a freak with his fellow-students, he had bribed the village photographer to let him have the picture of the young lady, which he had sent home to Olive, marked, "My Lost Love."

"No, I don't want to marry anybody," said Ben. "But I hate to live in a town where I 'm not first chop in everything."

"Pshaw!" cried his sister, "I guess it doesn't trouble you much."

"Well, I don't know that it does," he admitted.

Mrs. Halleck's black coachman drove her to Mrs.

Nash's door on Canary Place, where she alighted and rang with as great perturbation as if it had been a palace, and these poor young people to whom she was going to be kind were princes. It was sufficient that they were strangers; but Marcia's anxiety, evident even to meekness like Mrs. Halleck's, restored her somewhat to her self-possession; and the thought that Bartley, in spite of his personal splendour, was a friend of Ben's, was a help, and she got home with her guests without any great chasms in the conversation, though she never ceased to twist the window-tassel in her embarrassment.

Mr. Halleck came to her rescue at her own door, and let them in. He shook hands with Bartley again, and viewed Marcia with a fatherly friendliness that took away half her awe of the ugly magnificence of the interior. But still she admired that Bartley could be so much at his ease. He pointed to a stick at the foot of the hat-rack, and said, "How much that looks like Halleck!" which made the old man laugh, and clap him on the shoulder, and cry: "So it does! so it does! Recognised it, did you? Well, we shall soon have him with us again, now. Seems a long time to us since he went."

"Still limps a little?" asked Bartley.

"Yes, I guess he 'll never quite get over that."

"I don't believe I should like him to," said Bartley. "He wouldn't seem natural without a

cane in his hand, or hanging by the crook over his left elbow, while he stood and talked."

The old man clapped Bartley on the shoulder again, and laughed again at the image suggested. "That 's so! that 's so! You 're right, I *guess!*"

As soon as Marcia could lay off her things in the gorgeous chamber to which Mrs. Halleck had shown her, they went out to tea in the dining-room overlooking the garden.

"Seems natural, don't it?" asked the old man, as Bartley turned to one of the windows.

"Not changed a bit, except that I was here in winter, and I hadn't a chance to see how pretty your garden was."

"It *is* pretty, isn't it?" said the old man. "Mother—Mrs. Halleck, I mean—looks after it. She keeps it about right. Here 's Cyrus!" he said, as the serving-man came into the room with something from the kitchen in his hands. "You remember Cyrus, I guess, Mr. Hubbard?"

"Oh, yes!" said Bartley, and when Cyrus had set down his dish, Bartley shook hands with the New Hampshire exemplar of freedom and equality: he was no longer so young as to wish to mark a social difference between himself and the inside-man who had served Mr. Halleck with unimpaired self-respect for twenty-five years.

There was a vacant place at table, and Mr. Halleck

said he hoped it would be taken by a friend of theirs. He explained that the possible guest was his lawyer, whose office Ben was going into after he left the Law School; and presently Mr. Atherton came. Bartley was prepared to be introduced anew, but he was flattered, and the Hallecks were pleased to find that he and Mr. Atherton were already acquainted; the latter was so friendly, that Bartley was confirmed in his belief that you could not make an interview too strong, for he had celebrated Mr. Atherton among the other people present at the Indigent Surf-Bathing entertainment.

He was put next to Marcia, and after a while he began to talk with her, feeling with a tacit skill for her highest note, and striking that with kindly perseverance. It was not a very high note, and it was not always a certain sound. She could not be sure that he was really interested in the simple matters he had set her to talking about, and from time to time she was afraid that Bartley did not like it; she would not have liked him to talk so long or so freely with a lady. But she found herself talking on, about boarding, and her own preference for keeping house; about Equity, and what sort of place it was, and how far from Crawford's; about Boston, and what she had seen and done there since she had come in the winter. Most of her remarks began or ended with Mr. Hubbard; many of her opinions, especially

in matters of taste, were frank repetitions of what Mr. Hubbard thought; her conversation had the charm and pathos of that of the young wife who devotedly loves her husband, who lives in and for him, tests everything by him, refers everything to him. She had a good mind, though it was as bare as it could well be of most of the things that the ladies of Mr. Atherton's world put into their minds.

Mrs. Halleck made from time to time a little murmur of satisfaction in Marcia's loyalty, and then sank back into the meek silence that she only emerged from to propose more tea to some one, or to direct Cyrus about offering this dish or that.

After they rose she took Marcia about, to show her the house, ending with the room which Bartley had when he visited there. They sat down in this room and had a long chat, and when they came back to the parlour they found Mr. Atherton already gone. Marcia inferred the early habits of the household from the departure of this older friend, but Bartley was in no hurry; he was enjoying himself, and he could not see that Mr. Halleck seemed at all sleepy.

Mrs. Halleck wished to send them home in her carriage, but they would not hear of this; they would far rather walk, and when they had been

followed to the door, and bidden mind the steps as they went down, the wide open night did not seem too large for their content in themselves and each other.

"Did you have a nice time?" asked Bartley, though he knew he need not.

"The best time I ever had in the world!" cried Marcia.

They discussed the whole affair; the two old people; Mr. Atherton, and how pleasant he was; the house and its splendours, which they did not know were hideous. "Bartley," said Marcia at last, "I *told* Mrs. Halleck."

"Did you?" he returned, in trepidation; but after a while he laughed. "Well, all right, if you wanted to."

"Yes, I did; and you can't think how kind she was. She says we must have a house of our own somewhere, and she's going round with me in her carriage to help me to find one."

"Well," said Bartley, and he fetched a sigh, half of pride, half of dismay.

"Yes, I long to go to housekeeping. We can afford it now. She says we can get a cheap little house, or half a house, up at the South End, and it won't cost us any more than to board, hardly; and that's what I think too."

"Go ahead, if you can find the house. I don't

object to my own fireside. And I suppose we must."

"Yes, we must. Ain't you glad of it?"

They were in the shadow of a tall house, and he dropped his face toward the face she lifted to his, and gave her a silent kiss that made her heart leap toward him.

XX.

With the other news that Halleck's mother gave him on his return, she told him of the chance that had brought his old college comrade to them again, and of how Bartley was now married, and was just settled in the little house she had helped his wife to find. "He has married a very pretty girl," she said.

"Oh, I dare say!" answered her son. "He isn't the fellow to have married a plain girl."

"Your father and I have been to call upon them in their new house, and they seem very happy together. Mr. Hubbard wants you should come to see them. He talks a great deal about you."

"I'll look them up in good time," said the young man. "Hubbard's ardour to see me will keep."

That evening Mr. Atherton came to tea, and Halleck walked home with him to his lodgings, which were over the hill, and beyond the Public Garden. "Yes, it's very pleasant, getting back," he said, as they sauntered down the Common side of Beacon Street, "and the old town is picturesque after the best they can do across the water." He halted his

friend, and brought himself to a rest on his cane, for a look over the hollow of the Common and the level of the Garden, where the late September dark was keenly spangled with lamps. "'My heart leaps up,' and so forth, when I see that. Now that Athens and Florence and Edinburgh are past, I don't think there is any place quite so well worth being born in as Boston." He moved forward again, gently surging with his limp, in a way that had its charm for those that loved him. "It's more authentic and individual, more municipal, after the old pattern, than any other modern city. It gives its stamp, it characterises. The Boston Irishman, the Boston Jew, is a quite different Irishman or Jew from those of other places. Even Boston provinciality is a precious testimony to the authoritative personality of the city. Cosmopolitanism is a modern vice, and we 're antique, we 're classic, in the other thing. Yes, I 'd rather be a Bostonian, at odds with Boston, than one of the curled darlings of any other community."

A friend knows how to allow for mere quantity in your talk, and only replies to the quality, separates your earnest from your whimsicality, and accounts for some whimsicality in your earnest. "I didn't know but you might have got that bee out of your bonnet on the other side," said Atherton.

"No, sir; we change our skies, but not our bees. What should I amount to without my grievance?

You wouldn't have known me. This talk to-night about Hubbard has set my bee to buzzing with uncommon liveliness; and the thought of the Law School next week does nothing to allay him. The Law School isn't Harvard; I realise that more and more, though I have tried to fancy that it was. No, sir, my wrongs are irreparable. I had the making of a real Harvard man in me, and of a Unitarian, nicely balanced between radicalism and amateur episcopacy. Now, I am an orthodox ruin, and the undutiful stepson of a Down East *alma mater*. I belong nowhere; I'm at odds.—Is Hubbard's wife really handsome, or is she only country-pretty?"

"She's beautiful,—I assure you she's beautiful," said Atherton, with such earnestness that Halleck laughed.

"Well, that's right! as my father says. How's she beautiful?"

"That's difficult to tell. It's rather a superb sort of style; and—What did you really use to think of your friend?" Atherton broke off to ask.

"Who? Hubbard?"

"Yes."

"He was a poor, cheap sort of a creature. Deplorably smart, and regrettably handsome. A fellow that assimilated everything to a certain extent, and nothing thoroughly. A fellow with no more moral nature than a base ball. A sort of chap you'd

expect to find, the next time you met him, in Congress or the house of correction."

"Yes, that accounts for it," said Atherton thoughtfully.

"Accounts for what?"

"The sort of look she had. A look as if she were naturally above him, and had somehow fascinated herself with him, and were worshipping him in some sort of illusion."

"Doesn't that sound a little like refining upon the facts? Recollect: I've never seen her, and I don't say you're wrong."

"I'm not sure I'm not, though. I talked with her, and found her nothing more than honest and sensible and good; simple in her traditions, of course, and countrified yet in her ideas, with a tendency to the intensely practical. I don't see why she mightn't very well be his wife. I suppose every woman hoodwinks herself about her husband in some degree."

"Yes; and we always like to fancy something pathetic in the fate of pretty girls that other fellows marry. I notice that we don't sorrow much over the plain ones. How's the divine Clara?"

"I believe she's well," said Atherton. "I haven't seen her all summer. She's been at Beverley."

"Why, I should have supposed she would have come up and surf-bathed those indigent children

with her own hand. She 's equal to it. What made her falter in well-doing?"

"I don't know that we can properly call it faltering. There was a deficit in the appropriation necessary, and she made it up herself. After that, she consulted me seriously as to whether she ought not to stay in town and superintend the execution of the plan. But I told her she might fitly delegate that. She was all the more anxious to perform her whole duty, because she confessed that indigent children were personally unpleasant to her."

Halleck burst out laughing. "That 's like Clara! How charming women are! They 're charming even in their goodness! I wonder the novelists don't take a hint from that fact, and stop giving us those scaly heroines they 've been running lately. Why, a real woman can make righteousness delicious and virtue piquant. I like them for that!"

"Do you?" asked Atherton, laughing in his turn at the single-minded confession. He was some years older than his friend.

They had got down to Charles Street, and Halleck took out his watch at the corner lamp. "It isn't at all late yet,—only half-past eight. The days are getting shorter."

"Well?"

"Suppose we go and call on Hubbard now? He 's right up here on Clover Street!"

"I don't know," said Atherton. "It would do for you; you're an old friend. But for me,—wouldn't it be rather unceremonious?"

"Oh, come along! They'll not be punctilious. They'll like our dropping in, and I shall have Hubbard off my conscience. I must go to see him sooner or later, for decency's sake."

Atherton suffered himself to be led away. "I suppose you won't stay long?"

"Oh, no; I shall cut it very short," said Halleck; and they climbed the narrow little street where Marcia had at last found a house, after searching the South End quite to the Highlands, and ransacking Charlestown and Cambridgeport. These points all seemed to her terribly remote from where Bartley must be at work during the day, and she must be alone without the sight of him from morning till night. The accessibility of Canary Place had spoiled her for distances; she wanted Bartley at home for their one-o'clock dinner; she wanted to have him within easy call at all times; and she was glad when none of those far-off places yielded quite what they desired in a house. They took the house on Clover Street, though it was a little dearer than they expected, for two years, and they furnished it, as far as they could, out of the three or four hundred dollars they had saved, including the remaining hundred from the colt and cutter, kept sacredly intact by

Marcia. When you entered, the narrow staircase cramped you into the little parlour opening out of the hall; and back of the parlour was the dining-room. Overhead were two chambers, and overhead again were two chambers more; in the basement was the kitchen. The house seemed absurdly large to people who had been living for the last seven months in one room, and the view of the Back Bay from the little bay-window of the front chamber added all out-doors to their superfluous space.

Bartley came himself to answer Halleck's ring, and they met at once with such a "Why, Halleck!" and "How do you do, Hubbard?" as restored something of their old college comradery. Bartley welcomed Mr. Atherton under the gas-light he had turned up, and then they huddled into the little parlour, where Bartley introduced his old friend to his wife. Marcia wore a sort of dark robe, trimmed with bows of crimson ribbon, which she had made herself, and in which she looked a Roman patrician in an avatar of Boston domesticity; and Bartley was rather proud to see his friend so visibly dazzled by her beauty. It quite abashed Halleck, who limped helplessly about, after his cane had been taken from him, before he sat down, while Marcia, from the vantage of the sofa and the covert of her talk with Atherton, was content that Halleck should be plain and awkward, with close-cut drab hair and a dull

complexion; she would not have liked even a man who knew Bartley before she did to be very handsome.

Halleck and Bartley had some talk about college days, from which their eyes wandered at times; and then Marcia excused herself to Atherton, and went out, reappearing after an interval at the sliding doors, which she rolled open between the parlour and dining-room. A table set for supper stood behind her, and as she leaned a little forward with her hands each on a leaf of the door, she said, with shy pride, "Bartley, I thought the gentlemen would like to join you," and he answered, "Of course they would," and led the way out, refusing to hear any demur. His heart swelled with satisfaction in Marcia; it was something like: having fellows drop in upon you, and be asked out to supper in this easy way; it made Bartley feel good, and he would have liked to give Marcia a hug on the spot. He could not help pressing her foot, under the table, and exchanging a quiver of the eyelashes with her, as he lifted the lid of the white tureen, and looked at her across the glitter of their new crockery and cutlery. They made the jokes of the season about the oyster being promptly on hand for the first of the R months, and Bartley explained that he was sometimes kept at the *Events* office rather late, and that then Marcia waited supper for him, and always gave him an

oyster stew, which she made herself. She could not stop him, and the guests praised the oysters, and then they praised the dining-room and the parlour; and when they rose from the table Bartley said, "Now, we must show you the house," and persisted against her deprecations in making her lead the way. She was in fact willing enough to show it; her taste had made their money go to the utmost in furnishing it; and though most people were then still in the period of green reps and tan terry, and of dull black-walnut moveables, she had everywhere bestowed little touches that told. She had covered the marble parlour-mantel with cloth, and fringed it; and she had set on it two vases in the Pompeiian colours then liked; her carpet was of wood colour and a moss pattern; she had done what could be done with folding carpet chairs to give the little room a specious air of luxury; the centre-table was heaped with her sewing and Bartley's newspapers.

"We 've just moved in, and we haven't furnished *all* the rooms yet," she said of two empty ones which Bartley perversely flung open.

"And I don't know that we shall. The house is much too big for us; but we thought we 'd better take it," he added, as if it were a castle for vastness.

Halleck and Atherton were silent for some moments after they came away, and then, "*I* don't believe he whips her," suggested the latter.

"No, I guess he's fond of her," said Halleck gravely.

"Did you see how careful he was of her, coming up and down stairs? That was very pretty; and it was pretty to see them both so ready to show off their young housekeeping to us."

"Yes, it improves a man to get married," said Halleck, with a long, stifled sigh. "It's improved the most selfish hound I ever knew."

XXI.

THE two elder Miss Hallecks were so much older than Olive, the youngest, that they seemed to be of a sort of intermediary generation between her and her parents, though Olive herself was well out of her teens, and was the senior of her brother Ben by two or three years. The elder sisters were always together, and they adhered in common to the religion of their father and mother. The defection of their brother was passive, but Olive, having conscientiously adopted an alien faith, was not a person to let others imagine her ashamed of it, and her Unitarianism was outspoken. In her turn she formed a kind of party with Ben inside the family, and would have led him on in her own excesses of independence if his somewhat melancholy indifferentism had consented. It was only in his absence that she had been with her sisters during their summer sojourn in the White Mountains; when they returned home, she vigorously went her way, and left them to go theirs. She was fond of them in her defiant fashion; but in such a matter as calling on Mrs. Hubbard she chose not to be mixed up with her family, or in any way to countenance her family's prepossessions.

Her sisters paid their visit together, and she waited for Clara Kingsbury to come up from the seaside. Then she went with her to call upon Marcia, sitting observant and non-committal while Clara swooped through the little house, up stairs and down, clamouring over its prettiness, and admiring the art with which so few dollars could be made to go so far. "Think of finding such a bower on Clover Street!" She made Marcia give her the cost of everything; and her heart swelled with pride in her sex when she heard that Marcia had put down all the carpets herself. "I wanted to make them up," Marcia explained, "but Mr. Hubbard wouldn't let me,—it cost so little at the store."

"Wouldn't let you!" cried Miss Kingsbury. "I should hope as much, indeed! Why, my child, you're a Roman matron!"

She came away in agony lest Marcia might think she meant her nose. She drove early the next morning to tell Olive Halleck that she had spent a sleepless night from this cause, and to ask her what she *should* do. Do you think she will be hurt, Olive? Tell me what led up to it. How did I behave before that? The context is everything in such cases."

"Oh, you went about praising everything, and screaming, and shouting, and my-dearing and my-childing her, and patronising—"

"There, there! say no more! That's sufficient!

I see,—I see it all! I've done the very most offensive thing I could, when I meant to be the most appreciative."

"These country people don't like to be appreciated down to the quick, in that way," said Olive. "I should think Mrs. Hubbard was rather a proud person."

"I know! I know!" moaned Miss Kingsbury. "It was ghastly."

"*I* don't suppose she's ashamed of her nose—"

"Olive!" cried her friend, "be still! Why, I can't *bear* it? Why, you wretched thing!"

"I daresay all the ladies in Equity make up their own carpets, and put them down, and she thought you were laughing at her."

"*Will* you be still, Olive Halleck?" Miss Kingsbury was now a large, blonde mass of suffering. "O dear, dear! What shall I do? It was sacrilege—yes, it was nothing less than sacrilege—to go on as I did. And I meant so well! I did so admire, and respect, and revere her!" Olive burst out laughing. "You wicked girl!" whimpered Clara. "Should you—should you write to her?"

"And tell her you didn't mean her nose? Oh, by all means, Clara—by all means! Quite an inspiration. Why not make her an evening party?"

"Olive," said Clara, with guilty meekness, "I have been thinking of that."

"*No*, Clara! Not seriously!" cried Olive, sobered at the idea.

"Yes, seriously. Would it be so very bad? Only just a *little* party," she pleaded. "Half a dozen people or so; just to show them that I really feel —friendly. I know that he's told her all about meeting me here, and I'm not going to have her think I want to drop him because he's married, and lives in a little house in Clover Street."

"Noble Clara! So you wish to bring them out in Boston society? What will you do with them after you've got them there?" Miss Kingsbury fidgeted in her chair a little. "Now, look me in the eye, Clara! Whom were you going to ask to meet them? Your unfashionable friends, the Hallecks?"

"My friends, the Hallecks, of course."

"And Mr. Atherton, your legal adviser?"

"I had thought of asking Mr. Atherton. You needn't say what he is, if you please, Olive; you know that there's no one I prize so much."

"Very good. And Mr. Cameron?"

"He has got back,—yes. He's very nice."

"A Cambridge tutor; very young and of recent attachment to the College, with no local affiliations, yet. What ladies?"

"Miss Strong is a nice girl; she is studying at the Conservatory."

"Yes. Poverty-stricken votary of Miss Kingsbury. Well?"

"Miss Clancy."

"Unfashionable sister of fashionable artist. Yes?"

"The Brayhems."

"Young radical clergyman, and his wife, without a congregation, and hoping for a pulpit in Billerica. Parlour lectures on German literature in the meantime. Well?"

"And Mrs. Savage, I thought."

"Well-preserved young widow of uncertain antecedents tending to grassiness; out-door *protégée* of the hostess. Yes, Clara, go on and give your party. It will be *perfectly safe!* But do you think it will *deceive* anybody?"

"Now, Olive Halleck!" cried Clara, "I am not going to have you talking to me in that way! You have no right to do it, and you have no business to do it," she added, trying to pluck up a spirit. "Is there anybody that I value more than I do you and your sisters and Ben?"

"No. But you don't value us *just in that way*, and you know it. Don't you be a humbug, Clara. Now go on with your excuses."

"I'm not making excuses! Isn't Mr. Atherton in the most fashionable society?"

"Yes. Why don't you ask some other fashionable people?"

"Olive, this is all nonsense,—perfect nonsense! I can invite any one I like, to meet any one I like,

and if I choose to show Mr. Hubbard's wife a little attention, I can do it, can't I?"

"Oh, of course!"

"And what would be the use of inviting fashionable people—as you call them—to meet them? It would just embarrass them all round."

"Perfectly correct, Miss Kingsbury. All that I want you to do is to face the facts of the case. I want you to realise that, in showing Mr. Hubbard's wife this little attention, you 're not doing it because you scorn to drop an old friend, and want to do him the highest honour; but because you think you can palm off your second-class acquaintance on them for first-class, and try to make up in that way for telling her she had a hooked nose!"

"You *know* that I didn't tell her she had a hooked nose."

"You told her that she was a Roman matron,—it 's the same thing," said Olive.

Miss Kingsbury bit her lip and tried to look a dignified resentment. She ended by saying, with feeble spite, "I shall have the little evening for all you say. I suppose you won't refuse to come because I don't ask the whole Blue Book to meet them."

"Of course we shall come! I wouldn't miss it for anything. I always like to see how you manage your pieces of social duplicity, Clara. But you needn't expect that I will be a party to the swindle.

No, Clara! I shall go to these poor young people and tell them plainly, 'This is not the *best* society; Miss Kingsbury keeps that for—'"

"Olive! I think I never saw even you in such a teasing humour." The tears came into Clara's large tender blue eyes, and she continued with an appeal that had no effect, "I 'm sure I don't see why you should make it a question of anything of the sort. It 's simply a wish to—to have a little company of no particular kind, for no partic—. Because I want to."

"Oh, that 's it, is it? Then I highly approve of it," said Olive. When is it to be?"

"I shan't tell you, now! You may wait till I 'm ready," pouted Clara, as she rose to go.

"Don't go away thinking I 'm enough to provoke a saint because *you 're* got mad at me, Clara!"

"Mad? You know I 'm not mad! But I think you might be a *little* sympathetic *some*times, Olive!" said her friend, kissing her.

"Not in cases of social duplicity, Clara. My wrath is all that saves you. If you were not afraid of me, you would have been a lost worldling long ago."

"I know you always really love me," said Miss Kingsbury tenderly.

"No, I don't," retorted her friend promptly. "Not when you 're humbugging. Don't expect it, for you won't get it." She followed Clara with a triumphant laugh as she went out of the door; and,

except for this parting taunt, Clara might have given up her scheme. She first ordered her *coupé* driven home, in fact, and then lowered the window to countermand the direction, and drove to Bartley's door on Clover Street.

It was a very handsome equipage, and was in keeping with all the outward belongings of Miss Kingsbury, who mingled a sense of duty and a love of luxury in her life in very exact proportions. When her *coupé* was not standing before some of the wretchedest doors in the city, it was waiting at the finest; and Clara's days were divided between the extremes of squalor and of fashion.

She was the only child of parents who had early left her an orphan. Her father, who was much her mother's senior, was an old friend of Olive's father, and had made him his executor and the guardian of his daughter. Mr. Halleck had taken her into his own family, and, in the conscientious pursuance of what he believed would have been her father's preference, he gave her worldly advantages which he would not have desired for one of his own children. But the friendship that grew up between Clara and Olive was too strong for him in some things, and the girls went to the same fashionable school together.

When his ward came of age he made over to her the fortune, increased by his careful management, which her father had left her, and advised her to

put her affairs in the hands of Mr. Atherton. She had shown a quite ungirlish eagerness to manage them for herself; in the midst of her profusion she had odd accesses of stinginess, in which she fancied herself coming to poverty; and her guardian judged it best that she should have a lawyer who could tell her at any moment just where she stood. She hesitated, but she did as he advised; and having once intrusted her property to Atherton's care, she added her conscience and her reason in large degree, and obeyed him with embarrassing promptness in matters that did not interfere with her pleasures. Her pleasures were of various kinds. She chose to buy herself a fine house, and, having furnished it luxuriously and unearthed a cousin of her father's in Vermont and brought her to Boston to matronise her, she kept house on a magnificent scale, pinching, however, at certain points with unexpected meanness. When she was alone, her table was of a Spartan austerity; she exacted a great deal from her servants, and paid them as small wages as she could. After that she did not mind lavishing money upon them in kindness. A seamstress whom she had once employed fell sick, and Miss Kingsbury sent her to the Bahamas and kept her there till she was well, and then made her a guest in her house till the girl could get back her work. She watched her cook through the measles, caring for her like a mother; and, as Olive Halleck said, she

was always portioning or burying the sisters of her second-girls. She was in all sorts of charities, but she was apt to cut her charities off with her pleasures at any moment, if she felt poor. She was fond of dress, and went a great deal into society: she suspected men generally of wishing to marry her for her money, but with those whom she did not think capable of aspiring to her hand, she was generously helpful with her riches. She liked to patronise; she had long supported an unpromising painter at Rome, and she gave orders to desperate artists at home.

The world had pretty well hardened one half of her heart, but the other half was still soft and loving, and into this side of her mixed nature she cowered when she believed she had committed some blunder or crime, and came whimpering to Olive Halleck for punishment. She made Olive her discipline partly in her lack of some fixed religion. She had not yet found a religion that exactly suited her, though she had many times believed herself about to be anchored in some faith for ever.

She was almost sorry that she had put her resolution in effect when she rang at the door, and Marcia herself answered the bell, in place of the one servant who was at that moment hanging out the wash. It seemed wicked to pretend to be showing this pretty creature a social attention, when she meant to palm off a hollow imitation of society upon

her. Why should she not ask the very superfinest of her friends to meet such a brilliant beauty? It would serve Olive Halleck right if she should do this, and leave the Hallecks out; and Marcia would certainly be a sensation. She half believed that she meant to do it when she quitted the house with Marcia's promise that she would bring her husband to tea on Wednesday evening, at eight; and she drove away so far penitent that she resolved at least to make her company distinguished, if not fashionable. She said to herself that she would make it fashionable yet, if she chose, and as a first move in this direction she easily secured Mr. Atherton: he had no engagements, so few people had got back to town. She called upon Mrs. Witherby, needlessly reminding her of the charity committees they had served on together; and then she went home and actually sent out notes to the plainest daughter and the maiden aunt of two of the most high-born families of her acquaintance. She added to her list an artist and his wife ("Now I shall *have* to let him paint me!" she reflected), a young author whose book had made talk, a teacher of Italian with whom she was pretending to read Dante, and a musical composer.

Olive came late, as if to get a whole effect of the affair at once; and her smile revealed Clara's failure to her, if she had not realised it before. She read there that the aristocratic and æsthetic additions

which she had made to the guests Olive originally divined had not sufficed; the party remained a humbug. It had seemed absurd to invite anybody to meet two such little, unknown people as the Hubbards; and then, to avoid marking them as the subjects of the festivity by the precedence to be observed in going out to supper, she resolved to have tea served in the drawing-room, and to make it literally tea, with bread and butter, and some thin, ascetic cakes.

However sharp he was in business, Mr. Witherby was socially a dull man; and his wife and daughter seemed to partake of his qualities by affinition and heredity. They tried to make something of Marcia, but they failed through their want of art. Mrs. Witherby, finding the wife of her husband's assistant in Miss Kingsbury's house, conceived an awe of her, which Marcia would not have known how to abate if she had imagined it; and in a little while the Witherby family segregated themselves among the photograph albums and the bric-a-brac, from which Clara seemed to herself to be fruitlessly detaching them the whole evening. The plainest daughter and the maiden aunt of the patrician families talked to each other with unavailing intervals of the painter and the author, and the radical clergyman and his wife were in danger of a conjugal devotion which society does not favour; the unfashionable sister of the fashionable artist conversed with the young tutor and the Japanese law-student whom he had asked leave to

bring with him, and whose small mouse-like eyes continually twinkled away in pursuit of the blonde beauty of his hostess. The widow was winningly attentive, with a tendency to be confidential, to everybody. The Italian could not disabuse himself of the notion that he was expected to be light and cheerful, and when the pupil of the Conservatory sang, he abandoned himself to his error, and clapped and cried bravo with unseemly vivacity. But he was restored to reason when the composer sat down at the piano and played, amid the hush that falls on society at such times, something from Beethoven, and again something of his own, which was so like Beethoven that Beethoven himself would not have known the difference.

Mr. Atherton and Halleck moved about among the guests, and did their best to second Clara's efforts for their encouragement; but it was useless. In the desperation which owns defeat, she resolved to devote herself for the rest of the evening to trying to make at least the Hubbards have a good time; and then, upon the dangerous theory, of which young and pretty hostesses cannot be too wary, that a wife is necessarily flattered by attentions to her husband, she devoted herself exclusively to Bartley, to whom she talked long and with a reckless liveliness of the events of his former stay in Boston. Their laughter and scraps of their reminiscence reached Marcia where she sat in a feint of

listening to Ben Halleck's perfunctory account of his college days with her husband, till she could bear it no longer. She rose abruptly, and, going to him, she said that it was time to say good-night. "Oh, so soon!" cried Clara, mystified and a little scared at the look she saw on Marcia's face. "Good-night," she added coldly.

The assembly hailed this first token of its disintegration with relief; it became a little livelier; there was a fleeting moment in which it seemed as if it might yet enjoy itself; but its chance passed; it crumbled rapidly away, and Clara was left looking humbly into Olive Halleck's pitiless eyes. "Thank you for a *delightful* evening, Miss Kingsbury! Congratulate you!" she mocked, with an unsparing laugh. "Such a success! But why didn't you give them something to eat, Clara? Those poor Hubbards have a one-o'clock dinner, and I famished for them. I wasn't hungry myself,—*we* have a two-o'clock dinner!"

END OF VOL. I.

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